The National Future Farmer

December-January, 1987-88

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In This Issue

December-January, 1987-88
Volume 36 Number 2

12

30

38

Cover Story

14 *Welcome to Shenanigan Flats*

Rod Carder has transformed five acres of California wasteland into an oasis that now attracts migratory birds and other wildlife back to their natural habitat in the San Joaquin Valley. Cover photo by Andy Markwart.

FFA's 60th Convention

21 *The Main Event*

Enjoy five exclusive pages of FFA's special 60th National Convention. This year's event drew an all-star lineup of speakers from business, government and entertainment. Also, meet the top award winners and your new national officers.

People

34 *Center-Pivot Savings*

Hermiston, Oregon, FFA member John Rygh has developed a computer program that saves local growers big dollars in irrigation costs.

FFA Chapters

12 *National BOAC Winners*

The Sumner, Washington, FFA Chapter and Amy Dobesh of Denmark, Wisconsin, are named BOAC's national winners.

30 *The Marketing Game*

Agriculture students from Juda, Wisconsin, are using electronic news to bring their high school marketing class into the real world

38 *The Right Angle*

Here are some helpful ideas for chapter reporters looking to get their chapter's activities in the papers and on the air.

In Every Issue

4 Mailbag
6 News In Brief
8 Looking Ahead
36 Chapter Scoop
44 FFA In Action
50 Joke Page

The Bottom Line

Enthusiasm for FFA was at an all-time high at the 60th National FFA Convention in Kansas City, Missouri, November 12-14. Hotels were booked to capacity. There was standing room only for several convention sessions, and the sidewalks were a sea of blue jackets. Some of FFA's finest had come to town and the people of Kansas City rolled out the welcome mat for them.

For 60 years this has been an annual event. In the opinion of some, the convention only gets bigger and better every year. There always seem to be more contests, more awards and other activities, and more members and guests in attendance.

The theme for this year's convention was "FFA Agriculture's New Spirit." Quite a fitting theme for the spirited group who were present. But it doesn't end with the convention. This is also the theme for National FFA Week, February 20-27, 1988.

We hear a lot of talk these days about image. It is a topic of discussion in many FFA meetings the image of FFA and agriculture. What can we do about it?

National FFA Week is a special week set aside for all members and chapters throughout the nation to join hands in polishing FFA's image. It is a time to send out the message that agriculture is still needed; that FFA and vocational agriculture has a mission to help students find rewarding careers in this important industry. The 1988 theme was chosen to assist FFA chapters in getting that message across – agriculture's new spirit for a new generation of farmers, ranchers and agribusinessmen.

Let's keep this convention spirit alive for the entire year. Help lift FFA to new horizons during the next 60 years. Agriculture is still important and that is the bottom line.

Wilson Carnes

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Mailbag

Dealer Surprise!

One year ago I noticed in your magazine there were no tractor and equipment advertisers. What a shame, as future farmers are future customers of the industry.

Now, in your October-November issue, I see Ford-New Holland full-page ads! As a Ford-New Holland equipment dealer I am pleased to see us represented.

Mrs. Bud Garton
Turlock, California

Comments From the Community

On behalf of the Staples FFA Chapter and school district, thank you for publishing the article on the exchange program here in Staples (The Big Picture, August-September, 1987). We have received many comments from people throughout the area. This program has been a super addition to our chapter and it is great to see this message being sent to others.

Dave Becker
Agriculture Instructor
Staples, Minnesota

Subscription Upkeep

We have moved to Howard Air Force Base in the Republic of Panama. Although I am no longer a member of FFA, I would still like to receive the magazine.

Angela Chavez
Republic of Panama

I have recently gone into "semi-retirement" but I want to keep up with all the young people who belong to the FFA, the finest youth organization in the USA! I am also a lifetime member of the FFA Alumni Association so you can see I have a genuine interest in the boys and girls in blue!

Pat McKibben
Tampa, Florida

Cover to Cover

Your magazine is wonderful! I read it from cover to cover! I am now retired from the Sidney High School after 23 years, but I still keep in touch with the FFA and contribute to their fund-raising projects.

Mrs. Ruth Jones
Sharon, Vermont

October-November a Hit

I have enjoyed reading the October-November issue of *The National FUTURE FARMER*. There were so many interesting articles. Your editorial was excellent.

Archie Holdridge
Madison, Connecticut

You have been doing a great job in covering so much. I recently became an FFA member and so far, I like it. Thank you for the most interesting magazine in farming today.

Del Cloward
Valley Springs, California

Successful Farming

Really appreciate the nice mention you ran in the October-November issue on our ADAPT 2 conference—thanks! As a result, we hope to catch the interest of young farmers in the surrounding Kansas City area.

James M. Cornick
Publisher
Successful Farming
Des Moines, Iowa

Amazing???

The article "Those Amazing Judges" in the October-November issue claims that Atkinson FFA has racked up 3,000 victories in four years. At one contest per day, everyday for four years (365 x 4), the most they could have would be 1,460. Even at that I can't believe that there are that many contests close enough for them to travel to and still go to school and operate SOEPs. Their travel budget would have to be enormous. What's the real story?

John Dimick
FFA Advisor
Central Point, Oregon

The question is explained by Advisor Roger Carr as his chapter defeating 3,000 other teams (i.e., if 50 teams competed in a contest, he considered the team record as 50-1).—Ed.

Magazine Benefits

Please send me information on how I may subscribe to the magazine. Currently, I am enrolled in a teacher's certification program for agricultural education and feel this publication would be very beneficial.

Karen Fitzpatrick
Vernon, Connecticut

Send letters or notes with name, address and chapter to: MAILBAG, The National FUTURE FARMER, P.O. Box 15160, Alexandria, VA 22309. All letters are subject to editing.

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News In Brief

International Stars Tour Announced

The Chrysler Corporation Fund has announced a three-year grant to sponsor the four Star Farmers and four Star Agribusinessmen on an international agriculture experience program.

The 1987 Stars will be the first participants in the experience program scheduled for early 1988. The program, conducted by the FFA International Department, will feature an in-depth look at global agriculture. Focus areas will include market development, trade agreements and an understanding of U.S. trading partners.

The Chrysler Corporation is a 35-year sponsor of FFA through the National FFA Foundation.

Excellence Conferences

The first "Made for Excellence" personal development conference was held October 24-25 in Tampa, Florida. Over 175 FFA members, advisors and guests from nearly 40 chapters attended.

The conference encouraged each participant to develop a positive image and greater understanding of themselves and others. They also worked on identifying personal goals and developing a plan to achieve them.

Jayme Feary, southern region vice president, joined with several past Washington Conference staff members to conduct the conference.

The second conference was held in Des Moines, Iowa, October 31-November 1. Future conferences will be held in Ohio, December 5-6; Wisconsin, January 23-24; and California, January 30-31.

Idaho Member Wins Arc Welding Award

FFA member Ryan Samples of Burley, Idaho, has been named winner of the James F. Lincoln Arc Welding Foundation's Grand National Award. Samples won the award for having the most outstanding project made by a student 18 years or younger.

His project, the construction of a crop mulching residue flail shredder, netted Samples $1,000 in the national competition. Samples learned his welding skills in his vocational agriculture classes from his instructor, Gaylen Smyer.

Photo by Bill Stagg

New Food Film Released

The new Food For America film "The Case of the Sneaky Snack" was premiered at National FFA Convention in November and is now available on free loan through Venard Films, Ltd., or for purchase from the National Supply Service.

Educational as well as entertaining, the film features a detective duo and an outspoken German crime professor, Dr. Fruend, who lead viewers through the food and fiber industry as they search for clues left by a missing boy.

Produced by Raimondi Films of Washington, D.C., "The Case of the Sneaky Snack" is sponsored by Kraft, Inc., as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

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Looking Ahead

New Agronomic Hotline

Growers anywhere in the country can now call a toll-free number to find answers to their local agronomic questions. The telephone number is 1-800-AGVISOR. This agronomic hotline is being offered to all growers by the The New Northrup King.

"Callers will be able to talk with an agronomist who is experienced with the crops, soils, weather patterns and management options in their particular geography," says David Thomas, executive director of marketing for The New Northrup King.

Each call will be automatically routed to an agronomist who works in the caller's geography. That agronomist will answer the call unless on a field visit, in which case, an answering machine will record the caller's name and phone number.

Scientists Reset Sheep Biological Clocks

A natural biological clock in sheep tells them what season to start mating, but USDA researchers are trying to reset that clock to balance the market for lamb. "Left to their own devices, sheep normally mate in the fall and produce lambs in the spring," said sheep researcher James A. Fitzgerald. This is in response to a lessening of daylight in autumn days.

The following fall, these lambs—now fattened to about 120 pounds—go to market. The result: almost 800 million pounds of lamb hit the market at about the same time.

Artificial light and hormones can prompt sheep to "think" it is a different time of the year and may be used to reset the animal's biological clocks. Fitzgerald and a co-researcher at the agency's U.S. Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois, Idaho, are getting some of their flocks to breed at different times. About 60 to 70 percent of their ewes give birth and 50 percent bear twins in the off season.

The researchers are exposing rams to different levels of artificial light in a windowless barn. The study showed that the rams "responded favorably to the shorter days of light."

Also, a hormone called melatonin, is being studied because it may be responsible for the "winter blues"—a condition accompanied by feelings of exhaustion, depression and irritability. This hormone, secreted by the brain, "tells" the ewe when it's time to mate.

Moths Tracked by Radar

Billions of destructive corn earworm moths that invade southern cotton and corn fields start out at the Texas-Mexican border, reports scientest Alton N. Sparks of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, who has been tracking them with radar.

"We have evidence that these insects are highly mobile, that the 500,000 acres of field corn produced in the Lower Rio Grande Valley are a major source of their early season migrations, and that these migrations eventually cover and infest a pretty wide stretch of America's southern corn and cotton belts."

Studies show that the moths fly out of the valley at dusk and cruise through the night on air currents 500 to 5,000 feet above the ground. And when the wind is favorable, the moths can travel 200 miles in five to ten hours.

Each spring and summer, corn earworms infest corn and cotton throughout the Texas High Plains, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas and the Mississippi Delta. In 1986, they cost corn and cotton growers in these and other states nearly $1 billion in crop losses and pesticide applications.

To determine how many corn earworm moths migrate from the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the team uses a narrow-beam radar that can spot a single, 1-inch moth flying over a mile away. The team has tracked as many as 50,000 insects per hour and 16 million in the space of a mile.

A weather balloon is released near Weslaco, Texas, to help study the migratory behavior of corn earworms. *USDA Photo by Jack Dykinga*

Boy Scouts Offer Agribusiness Badge

The Boy Scouts of America have introduced its newest merit badge: Agribusiness.

In 1978, the Boy Scouts added Food Systems to its list of 120-plus merit badges which comprise the core of its advancement program. Then in 1980, Farm and Ranch Management was added. Both replaced other farm-oriented badges which had become outdated and which, Scouting's volunteer Advancement Committee felt, were too restrictive in content.

Now the organization has blended the best from these badges and substantially strengthened the requirements.

The requirements stress knowledge of a wide range of agribusinesses in a Scout's community, and by calling for visits to a variety of facilities, a strong vocational emphasis is encouraged.

Scouts are also asked to trace the steps required to produce, market, process and distribute a food or fiber of both plant and animal origin. Finally, the Scout is asked to talk to fellow troop members about agribusiness careers.

Several years in development, the new Agribusiness badge was prepared in cooperation with Texas A&M University, Cooperative Extension Service offices and other agricultural agencies.

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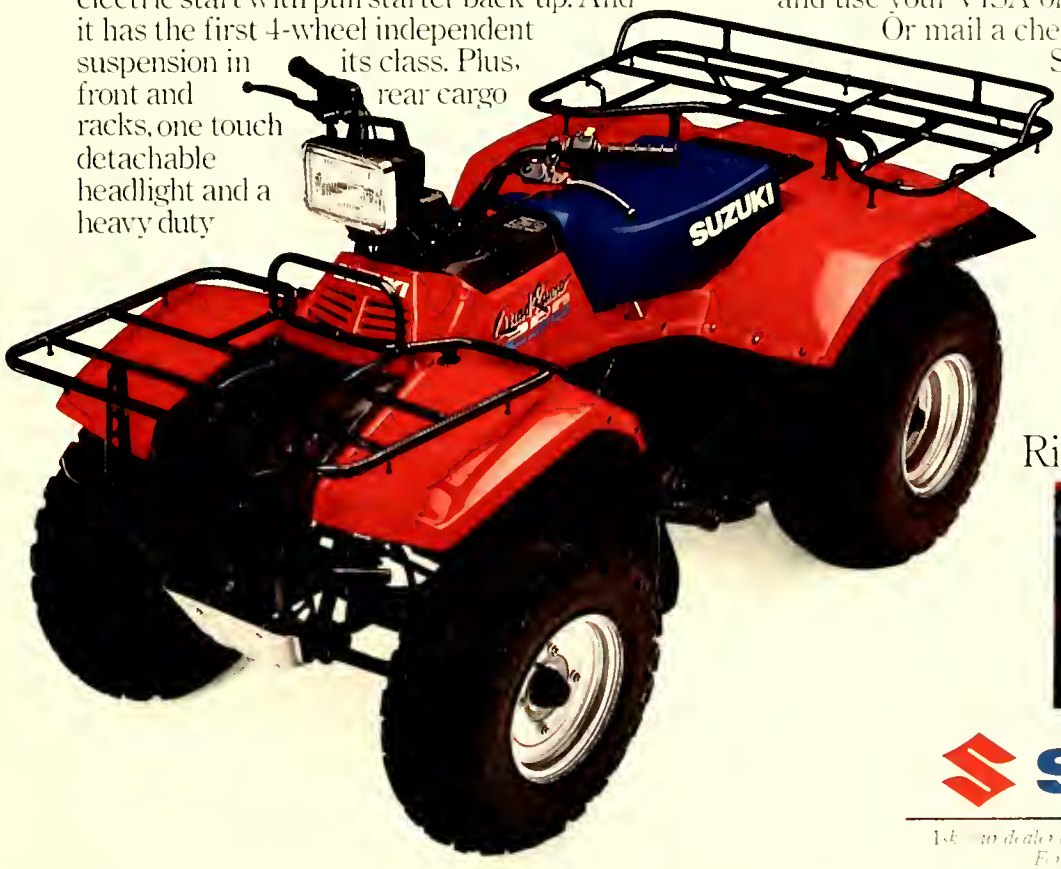

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FORD PICKUPS

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Friends Indeed

Individual, Chapter Winners Named at National BOAC Conference

BOAC's top winners received their awards at a congressional luncheon on Capitol Hill. First row, left to right, are: Shellie Rose, Jenks, Oklahoma; Barney Wiseman, Raton, New Mexico; Katie Heitstuman, Sumner, Washington, (National Chapter winner); Amy Sue Dobesh, Denmark, Wisconsin (Achievement in Volunteerism winner); Patrick Loflin, Bartlett, Tennessee; and Leon Ammons, Farmington, West Virginia. Back row, left to right, are: Kelly Bach, Orange City, Iowa; Sarah Marie Weeks, Elizabeth City, North Carolina; Kevin Fluit, Luverne, Minnesota; and Jerome Fink, Union, Missouri. *Photos courtesy of RJR Nabisco, Inc.*

AN FFA chapter that stepped forward to help their high school classmates and a young woman who works to improve the lives of the elderly, handicapped and children in her hometown were honored for their contributions at the Fifth National FFA Conference on Community Development, September 26-30, in Washington, D.C.

For the first time in the 17-year history of the Building Our American Communities (BOAC) program, this year's national winning chapter, the Sumner, Washington, FFA Chapter, was announced at the five-day conference. The Sumner chapter developed a five-part project based on the theme "Awareness Alert."

At the forefront of their BOAC program was a two-hour assembly for their fellow high school students called "Respect Yourself Day." It addressed teenage issues of stress, smoking, drinking and driving, sex, dieting and self-esteem. BOAC chairperson Katie Heitstuman, FFA Advisor Greg Pile and the rest of the Sumner chapter also coordinated "Refusal Skills" workshops for elementary students that addressed peer-pressure and self-esteem.

Other activities included in Sumner's "Awareness Alert" project were classroom presentations about agriculture in urban Seattle elementary schools and sheep-shearing demonstrations for handicapped students.

The Sumner chapter and the three other national finalist chapters—Marion County, West Virginia; Bunnell, Florida; and Orange City, Iowa—will be featured in upcoming issues of *The National FUTURE FARMER.*

Denmark's Finest

BOAC's highest individual honor, the "Achievement in Volunteerism" award, was presented to Amy Sue Dobesh of Denmark, Wisconsin, for the leadership role she has taken in that community. The Denmark FFA Chapter received a $1,000 award in Amy's name from RJR Nabisco, Inc., who sponsors BOAC and

the national conference as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. Second-place winner Patrick Loflin of Bartlett, Tennessee, received $750 and third-place winner Sarah Marie Weeks of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, received $500. Each of the remaining finalists received $400 and all were awarded plaques.

Dobesh piloted Denmark's "Beauty Thru The Eyes of BOAC" project that encouraged residents of the small Wisconsin community to take pride in their school and community and to appreciate the area's surrounding beauty. Amy and her fellow members picked the area of focus based on a survey they conducted which revealed that 86 percent of Denmark's residents believed their community needed a "new look."

Under Amy's leadership, and with guidance from FFA Advisors Matthew Gliniecki and Ken Seering, the Denmark chapter developed an Outdoor Lab which contains nature trails and a picnic area with new eating tables and flowers. And when the Brown County Agricultural and Fair Association decided to include a petting zoo in their fair at the last minute, they called on Amy's BOAC committee to make it happen.

"The petting zoo was a real urgency for us," said Roger Piehl, secretary of the Brown County Fair. "Amy and her committee came through in flying colors, making the petting zoo a real plus to our 1986 Fair. The petting zoo contained over 17 farm animals and was such a success at the fair that it was incorporated into two other state agricultural events, reaching nearly 10,000 people."

But Amy's involvement in her community didn't stop there. "She displays unending enthusiasm and sensitivity through her work with the elderly and with the Community Cupboard in the collection of food for the needy," said Advisor Gliniecki.

Amy says she enjoys working with the elderly at the Danish Villa Housing Complex in Denmark where she has organized bingo and Christmas parties, entertained residents with sing-alongs and spends many hours talking with the shut-ins. She has also organized several wheelchair basketball games and two benefit dances for young people who were terminally ill with cancer.

The national BOAC conference, entitled "Leadership for Changing Communities" was led by Kevin Eblen, national FFA president, who joined participants from all 50 states in workshops that included community and personal development, public relations, international trade and BOAC project ideas.

The group also received a first-hand look at their government as they interned at congressional offices on Capitol Hill and toured the Washington, area..

Throughout the week's activities, the BOAC winners were addressed by leaders in government, education and business including Peter Myers, deputy secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Congressman E. "Kika" de la Garza; Senator Patrick Leahy and Marshall Bass, senior vice president of RJR Nabisco, Inc.

In Secretary Myers' remarks to the winners during a luncheon Sunday, he congratulated them on their efforts in building, and in many cases re-building their American communities. "Revitalizing rural America is not an easy thing to do, but you have been very much a part of it with your community projects," said Myers. "Some have contributed directly to economic development, others were focused on recreation, beautification and soil conservation. All contribute to your community and make it a more attractive and better place to live, and that's going to help any community." •••

Hawaii Representative Daniel Akaka congratulates Jody Augustina on her Konawena FFA Chapter's BOAC program. Jody and 49 other state BOAC winners interned in congressional offices on Capitol Hill.

National FFA President Kevin Eblen greets Rep. E. "Kika" de la Garza, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, right, and Sen. Patrick Leahy, chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, center.

Welcome to Shenanigan Flats

By Andrew Markwart

Rod Carder's strong hands, battered and scarred from two years of manhandling jagged chunks of concrete, sweep across the horizon pointing out his greatest achievement. "When our family moved out here, there was nothing," he remembers. "It was like a desert."

What once was sprawling acres of barren, lifeless earth, is now a five-acre oasis, busy with wildlife, fish and waterfowl. The heart of this oasis is a man-made pond, stocked with fish and brimming with fresh water pumped from a well driven by the wind.

In the center of the pond is an island, constructed mostly of sand and mortar packed into chicken wire—a technique used by amusement parks across America. A waterfall on the island churns oxygen into the water to support the aquatic life below. The old wooden bridge that connects the island to the "mainland" is a castoff from a highway department project.

All this was built, for the most part, by 18-year-old Carder, an enterprising young man with a soft spot for nature and energy to spare. With the help of his father, Ted, and his friends he met in FFA, he has constructed not only a new home for native wildlife, but a monument to the spirit that one person *can* make a difference. He calls this ambitious project, "Shenanigan Flats."

This wildlife refuge, which started as a tree nursery project, now attracts the Sandhill Crane, Canada Geese, curlews and Mallard and Pintail ducks. Until the mid-1800s, these birds would darken the sky as they migrated south each year, stopping to rest in Rod's hometown area of Kerman, California, which is in the heart of the dry, dusty San Joaquin Valley. The valley is California's agricultural heartland, producing hundreds of commodities for the West Coast and the rest of the U.S.

The surrounding crops can be raised only through the heavy use of irrigation. Through the years, local producers have groomed the land to be used for large scale production by draining wetlands

(Continued on next page)

Shenanigan Flats

(Continued from Page 15)

Rod's pond, covering about five acres, was built mostly by hand. On the previous page, Rod's bridge was built with highway department "leftovers." *Photos by Author*

for their fields, sharply decreasing and sometimes eliminating native habitat for migrating birds and other wildlife.

Rod's family settled on 20 acres of this desolate land in 1975 when their only neighbors were, according to Rod, "rattlesnakes, horned toads, kangaroo rats and coyotes."

Rod bought a five-acre section of hardpan ground that virtually had no topsoil. The hardpan ground would hold six inches of the spring's rainwater for the first part of the year, and then dry up as the hot summer wore on.

To make the shallow pond useful, Rod built five-foot banks to hold large amounts of water. He scraped some of the surrounding land for a base, but when that wasn't enough, he went shopping.

A factory had been built just south of Kerman two years ago, but then went bankrupt. New owners then decided to rebuild most of the plant and tore out all of the support walls, leaving tons of useless, broken concrete. Rod offered them a deal: have the city dump the concrete slabs at his pond site, and he'd take care of the rest. The contractors said okay. One company's junk was another man's treasure.

In fact, most of the materials Rod used to constuct the pond were secondhand and Rod revived the age-old bartering system to acquire the goods. "I had to barter and trade to get it done, because it would have cost too much to get it done any other way," says Rod. "Most of this place was built out of junk. I scrounged for everything."

Well, almost everything. After the pond's concrete banks were built, there was a slight problem: there was no water to fill the pond. Rod drilled a 119-foot well by himself using a drill rig equipped with a 2-1/2 horsepower engine he purchased. He had to drill the well three separate times, using larger bit sizes each time. Although it was hard work, Rod explained, "You learn a lot because of the different water strata, soils and textures. I found that our water table has dropped from 50 to 85 feet on our property."

Rod also found something he hadn't expected while drilling: flowing water underground. It was this flowing water that brought one of his project's strangest surprises. As Rod was busy with the drill rig, an aquatic frog apparently was forced up through the pipe. As Rod describes it, this was no ordinary frog. "This frog had no eyes and no feet, just round stubs. It was white as could be—he hardly looked like a frog, but he jumped and was shaped like one."

To sustain the pond with fresh water without running up huge utility bills, Rod installed a windmill to drive the well's pump. The water is pumped into a customized 100-year-old wooden olive vat where is flows out through pcv pipe and down five feet into the pond. This aerates the water for the fish he has stocked in the pond.

Rod says the fishing is good for bass, bluegill, crappie and catfish. He stocked the pond gradually by taking friends on overnight fishing trips and bringing back alive all the fish they caught.

Rod also found that on overcast days, algae thrived in the pond, stressing the fish he had labored to get started. So he installed a sprinkler on his island and the fish have been doing fine ever since.

The Wild Side

Along with the fish and migrating birds, other animals—both wild and tame—roam around Shenanagin Flats. Ringnecked pheasants fly in from local cotton fields at harvesttime to hide in the pomegranate trees and pampas grass. Rabbits, about 150 of them, dart in and out of the brush. Wild boars, peacocks and emus (tall, ostrich-like birds) give an exotic flair to Rod's menagerie.

For his exceptional work on this project, Rod was named FFA's 1987 western region Wildlife Management Proficiency winner. At press time, the national winner had not been selected. The award is sponsored by Philip Morris Incorporated as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Rod said applying for the award was very much an after-the-fact decision. "I've had the project going for several years now, but I never started it as wildlife management because I wasn't sure what (award area) to put it under," he says, "I didn't even know there was a category for it in the FFA."

At the urging of his advisor, Leanne Potstada (who calls this "the most nontraditional FFA project I've ever seen"), he applied for the award while serving as president of the Kerman FFA Chapter last year. Rod plans to continue his interest in wildlife as he begins college in January. He will be enrolling in the forestry and wildlife major at Kings River Community College with hopes to become a park ranger after finishing his degree at Fresno State.

Back at Shenanagin Flats, Rod completes his guided tour and summarizes what it takes to tackle such a project. "You have to have the contacts for the materials, it's a lot of hard work with your hands, and it takes a lot of dedication," he says. The best part of the whole project, he says, is that,"it's taking a piece of ground that was useless for farming and turning it into something that's supporting the wildlife."

And those migrating birds, whose resting place had gradually disappeared over the years, are starting to return. •••

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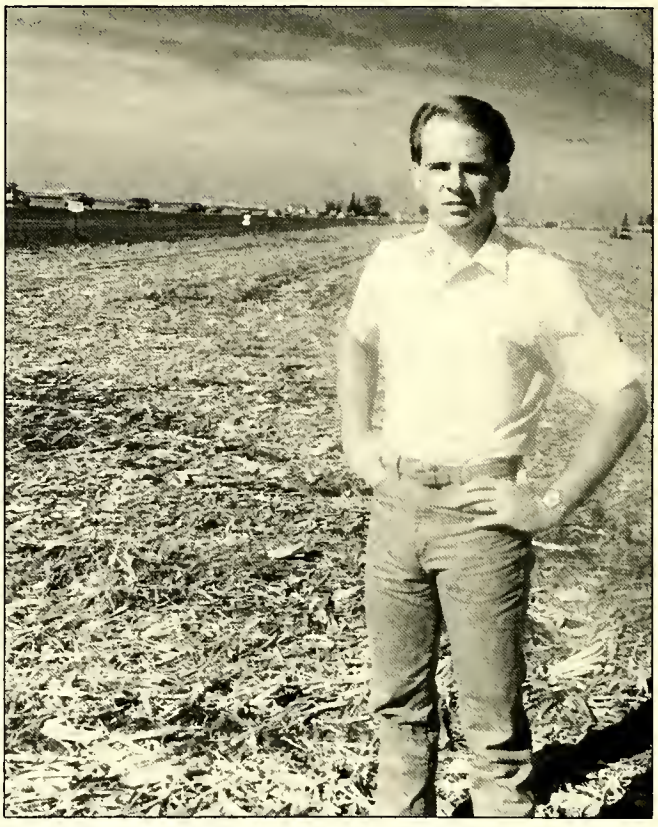
"One day you're out on the farm in jeans checking yields. The next day you're in a suit and tie in the office, figuring out marketing strategy."

—Chad McDonald

The New Ag Professionals:

Farm Management



Chad McDonald, Brenton State Bank farm manager.

"DECISION-MAKING is probably the key element of farm management," says 22-year-old Chad McDonald, Jefferson, Iowa.

He should know. In the five short months McDonald has worked as a farm manager he has had ample opportunities to put his decision-making skills to work. The decisions he makes eventually lead to the goal of every farm manager: to make wise choices on all the variables and inputs that go into farming, and improve or maintain reasonable profits.

That goal is more tricky than it sounds. Besides decision-making ability, a good farm manager must have people and financial skills, good judgement, an understanding of agriculture and government programs and a knack for being a self-starter.

McDonald, a recent ag business graduate from Iowa State University, doubles as farm manager and loan officer at Brenton State Bank. There, the farm management department handles 12,000 acres of prime Midwest cropland.

That keeps McDonald busy—whether out on farms working with clients and tenants, or back at the office watching his computer for the latest market prices. There is no "typical" day for a farm manager, McDonald quickly discovered.

"Every day is a new experience," he says. "One day you're out on the farm in jeans checking yields. The next day you're in a suit and tie in the office, figuring out marketing strategy.

"I can be having soil tests performed, getting fertilizer recommendations, going over planting and tillage plans with tenants, working on government programs or setting up cash flow statements," says Chad, a former FFA member from the North Polk FFA Chapter in Alleman, Iowa.

Tim Fevold, one of 15 farm managers at Hertz Farm Management, Nevada, Iowa, says farm management jobs are found primarily in banks, insurance companies and specialty firms like Hertz, which manages 200,000 acres of Midwest farmland as well as real estate and livestock consulting services.

Farm managers often work as a liaison between farmers who work the land and landowners who hope to maximize their investment. Sometimes they must walk a tightrope between the two.

"We're working with many different people in our profession," says 27-year-old Fevold. "Many times it's difficult to balance the client's objectives with the objectives of the tenant-farmer. It can get rather frustrating at times."

Yet Tim and Chad, who both grew up on farms, love their jobs. "It's the type of job that keeps me close to agriculture," says Tim. "I make my own schedule, so it never gets boring. With every day there are new challenges and responsibilities."

Most farm management positions require strong interest and understanding of farming and finance. "In our company we find it particularly useful to have a farm background," says Tim. "It's not a prerequisite, but it is useful."

Tim began his farm management career directly out of college five years ago, after majoring in ag business and finance. "The ag business degree was not a requirement," he says. "Most of our employees have an ag degree in some specialty, such as animal science or ag education."

Tim says farm managers must be able to work without a great deal of supervision. "You have to be able to take care of the properties you are managing without someone looking over your shoulder all the time," he says.

Such responsibility requires sound judgement and analytical skills. "You have to be able to grasp a problem, determine what the alternatives are, then select the best alternative that fits the situation," he says.

"It is a people-oriented job, so you must be a good communicator. You must know how to be firm and fair." Adds Chad McDonald, "We try to be flexible and decisive in our thinking. It may not always be the right decision, but it's the best decision at the time."

One challenge Chad enjoys is going before prospective clients to generate new business. "It takes professional, personable skills," he says. "People don't just come in here and ask us to manage their farms. We must go out and solicit new clients." •••

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A sponsor of the American Quarter Horse Association and National High School Rodeo Association.

Conventions were small during the war. This 1945 National Convention was held in the Little Theatre of the Municipal Auditorium.

FFA's Second 10 Years

The second in a series of articles on the history of FFA.

By Wilson Carnes

THE FFA's second ten years was a period of growth interrupted by a World War. During this time, national activities were severely restricted. But at war's end, the FFA came back stronger than ever.

There were three major accomplishments for FFA from 1938-1947. The national FFA camp was started, members and chapters made major contributions to the war effort and the National FFA Foundation was organized.

In 1939, the National FFA Organization purchased land which was once part of George Washington's estate and established a national FFA camp. The purchase of the property was an outgrowth of the desire to have a national leadership training school for FFA members.

At the convention that year Executive Secretary W. A. Ross reported the site was three miles west of Mount Vernon near Alexandria, Virginia. In all, FFA now owned approximately 35 acres of land.

Rising costs forced a scaling-down of the original plans so that only one barracks building with space for 76 persons and a dining hall could be built with available funds. On May 30, 1941, a group of FFA members from Wilton, Wisconsin, were the first to make use of the camp facilities. During the remainder of the summer 483 members from 49 chapters in 17 states used the camp as a place to stay while they toured in the Washington vicinity.

The outbreak of World War II in the fall of 1941 caused FFA to close the camp until the summer of 1946. After the war, there never were enough members using the facilities to make it worth the cost, so the camp was closed.

The FFA attained a new high in membership of 245,830 in 1942 in 7,542 chapters. But World War II had engulfed the world. Many vocational agriculture instructors were volunteering for service in the armed forces and the war industries. It was necessary to close some of the vocational agriculture departments for the duration of the war. A gradual decline took place in FFA membership and in the number of FFA chapters. By 1945, there were 196,253 FFA members in 6,030 chapters.

Future Farmers were active in their communities collecting scrap metal, rubber and paper. They were buying and helping sell war bonds. They were producing food, fiber and other agricultural products which were urgently needed in the war effort. Many of the older members were in the armed service.

During the war years, the national conventions were streamlined affairs. Only delegates and award winners attended. At the 1942 convention only 217 persons were present. After the surrender of Japan, the delegates to the 1945 convention made plans for a victory celebration to be held in 1946. More than 12,500 attended the Victory Convention and it was necessary to set up cots in empty warehouses and other buildings to provide sleeping space. A special memorial program honored former members who served in the armed forces.

The support of business and industry for the activities of vocational agriculture students dates back to the days before the FFA was organized. The early support usually consisted of prizes and awards for students who won judging contests, premiums at fairs and other recognition. By the early 1940s it was becoming apparent that the FFA could find itself involved in too many award programs.

Dr. W. T. Spanton, national FFA advisor, and members of his staff took the initiative in developing a program to solve the problem. From consultations with business leaders, state FFA advisors and others, there evolved the plan for the Future Farmers of America Foundation, Inc.

The FFA Foundation was incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia on March 29, 1944. •••

Milestones

1938-Delegates set aside $6,000 for National FFA Camp.
1939-Additional land purchased for $12,000, bringing total to approximately 35 acres
1941-National FFA Camp opened
-Dr. W. T. Spanton becomes third National Advisor
1944-National FFA Foundation formed
1946-Victory Celebration Convention attracts over 12,500 members and guests
1947-National Officer Good Will Tour started
-National Judging Contest resumed under FFA
-First appearance of National FFA Band
-FFA Week changed to week of Washington's Birthday
-Membership totals 206,104

For more on the early history of FFA, see the book FFA at 50 *available from the National FFA Supply Service. Price $5 plus shipping and handling. See 1987-88 Supply Service catalog, page 25.*

The Main Event

Top Speakers Draw Record Crowd to 60th Convention

By Andrew Markwart

After his speech Thursday night, Lee Iacocca, center, was presented with the first-ever "Outstanding American Award" from the National FFA Foundation. The plaque was presented by Robert Lanphier, 1987 Foundation Sponsors' Board chairman, left, and Kevin Eblen, 1986-87 national FFA president, right.

It was the year of power speakers. Some of the most powerful leaders in America addressed the 60th National FFA Convention from the podium in Municipal Auditorium's Main Arena. Lee Iacocca, George Bush, Robert Dole, William Bennett—the names are practically synonymous with industry, government and education.

Their presence at the convention, held November 12-14 in Kansas City, Missouri, drew more people from across the country than ever before, setting a new convention attendance record of 24,125 FFA members, advisors, sponsors and guests. On Thursday night, November 12, the eyes of national officers Kevin Eblen, Kevin Yost, Dean Harder, Jayme Feary, Daren Coppock, Jones Loflin and everyone attending the convention were focused on Lee Iacocca.

For many this was the high point of the entire convention and Iacocca, chairman and chief executive officer of Chrysler Corporation, delivered a hard-hitting, eye-opening speech about the future of America that FFA members will be quoting for some time. Iacocca stressed the need for strong leadership in a time when the U.S. has to face up to a staggering national debt load and its inability to compete in the world marketplace.

On the debt load, Iacocca said, "Our country is now $2.4 trillion in debt after 211 years. Half of that 2.4 trillion has been booked just since most of you in this room joined the FFA."

He also said that the U.S. will not dominate the world as it had in his life-

Above, top, Vice President Bush greets Rob Embody and Christine Hill of Idaho; center, Miss America Kaye Lani Rae Rafko; and Senator Robert Dole.

time. He said,"The challenge is for your generation to lead a world that it no longer dominates— and debtors cannot be leaders. Insist on policies that guarantee you a chance to compete in this world you won't be dominating. Because if you can't compete, how can you lead?"

Iacocca repeatedly told FFA members to ask themselves, "What kind of America do I want?" because, he said, the America we know today will change drastically in the next 50 years. At the end of his speech, Iacocca was presented with the first-ever Outstanding American Award by the National FFA Foundation by Sponsors' Board Chairman Robert Lanphier.

Bush and Bennett

With a presidential election coming next November, the two front-running Republican candidates, Vice President George Bush and Senator Robert Dole seized the opportunity to make their stand on agricultural issues. Bush addressed the convention Thursday morning, telling FFA members that he rejects the ideas of protectionist trade barriers and agricultural subsidies.

He said positive alternatives to those policies were to "open up markets abroad, develop the rural economy and find new uses for our agricultural products." He emphasized the use of alternative fuels, especially ethanol, as a particular solution. After his speech, Bush visited overflow crowds in both the Exhibition Hall and the Music Hall since the Main Arena had been filled to capacity.

Just before Vice President Bush spoke, Secretary of Education William Bennett challenged FFA members to develop their character, noting that everyone has the responsibilities of being a citizen in this country. He emphasized that, "Citizenship includes all the characters of virtue added together. Those elements are what the Future Farmers of America are made of: hard work, integrity, self discipline, independence, industry, love of country, honesty and respect of the law."

Dole

On Saturday morning, Senator Dole commended FFA members for sticking with the high school agriculture program "despite some tough times on the farm." He suggested that "agricultural education must be expanded to reflect the high-tech world of tomorrow," and should place greater emphasis on consumer needs.

He also said the program needs to be broadened to include kindergarten through high school and beyond and that "magnet" high schools for the agrisciences and agribusinesses be established in urban centers.

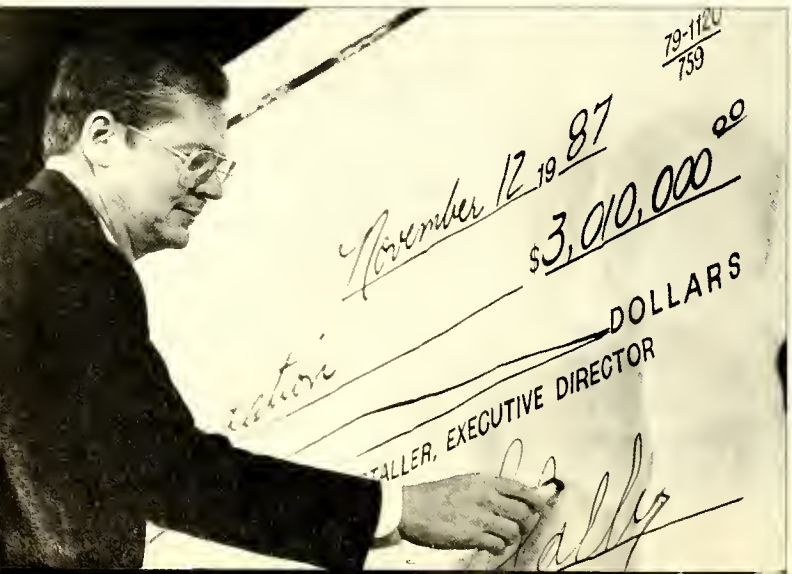
Other speakers at the convention included Miss America, Kaye Lani Rae Rafko; Roger Staubach, Hall of Fame quarterback ; John Block, former Secretary of Agriculture; Dr. Bonnie Guiton, Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education; David Okerlund, motivational speaker and Charlie Pride, country music performer.

The Big Winners

Big-name speakers were only a part of what happened in Kansas City. Franklin Howey, Jr. of Monroe, North Carolina, was named Star Farmer of America and Dan Ruehling of Belle Plaine, Minnesota, was named Star Agribusinessman of America. Each of this year's regional

(Continued on Page 24)

Bernie Staller, executive director of the National FFA Foundation signs a check for the largest amount ever raised by the Foundation—$3,010,000.



David Gerfen erupts after being named national Diversified Livestock Production Proficiency winner. Brian Clinckscales, right, was the southern region winner.

Clockwise from top left, Star Farmer of America Franklin Howey, Jr., of Monroe, North Carolina, left, shares the spotlight with Star Agribusinessman Dan Ruehling of Belle Plaine, Minnesota; speaker John Block, former Secretary of Agriculture; Janet Bartlett of Shawnee Mission, Kansas, wasn't mimicking convention speaker Roger Staubach during the first convention session. On the contrary, she was interpreting his speech for Merritt Holloway, a deaf FFA member from Walla Walla, Washington. Bartlett was hired by the Washington State Association to interpret the entire convention for Holloway; and speaker Dr. Bonnie Guiton, Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education.

Lee Iacocca, left, shares a quiet moment with the national officers in his hotel suite after Thursday night's session. *Photos by Andrew Markwart, Mike Wilson, Orlin Wagner, Tom Corby, Sam Harrel, Keith Kreeger, Thad Welch, Rob Sheffler and Bill Stagg*

Heads turned as Secretary of Education William Bennett talked about the principles that make America great.

Russell Callahan of Mira Loma, California, gets tough with a set of tri-toms during a drum cadence solo Friday night.

Alumni Jim Sipioski of Green Bay, Wisconsin, helped spot bidders for the customized full-size Chevy pickup.

Walt Register of Atlanta, Georgia, eyes his compass during the national forestry judging contest.

(Continued from page 22)

stars will travel to Europe in 1988 through the sponsorship of the Chrysler Corporation Fund. The national judging contest finals were held, drawing 396 teams and were run by about 400 volunteers.

Scott Stewart of the Bethel FFA Chaper in Stillwater, Oklahoma, won the national Prepared Public Speaking Contest with his speech "Going, Going, But Not Gone!" Jeff Gilliam of Lexington, Tennessee, placed first in the Extemporaneous Public Speaking Contest with his speech, "Using the Science and Business of Agriculture to Improve the Agricultural Industry."

Lloyd McCabe of Chowchilla, California, was named Agriscience Teacher of the Year for his innovative approaches to agricultural instruction. For FFA members, a new Agriscience Student Recognition Program was announced. Starting in 1988, agriculture students can win up to $8,500 in college scholarships through the sponsorship of Monsanto Agricultural Company as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

Regional winners will present their projects at the 1988 convention and receive expense-paid trips to Kansas City. Projects should stress biological, environmental and food sciences. Judging will be on the project's emphasis on agriscience, the student's academic ability and FFA activities.

In other award areas, Ohio captured eight of the 29 national proficiency awards. There were a total of 33 gold, 66 silver and 62 bronze National Chapter Safety Awards presented to chapters from across the U.S. The American Farmer Degree, the highest degree of membership available for an individual, was bestowed upon 728 members.

Big News

The National FFA Foundation raised $3.01 million for FFA in 1987, shattering last year's record of $2.59 million. Robert Lanphier, 1987 sponsors' board chairman and CEO of DICKEY-john Corporation, congratulated the 668 Foundation sponsors who gave to the organization this past year by paraphrasing Abraham Lincoln and stating, "Money is given by good people, to good people, for good people."

A proposed name change for the organization was easily defeated in the delegate business session. The National Agricultural Career Show was sold out this year, hosting 189 companies, agricultural firms, universities and FFA exhibits.

There were some firsts in FFA audiovisuals this year. A satellite uplink through the Agricultural Information Satellite network (AGRI-SAT) made 15 hours of the convention available to more than two million receivers in the United States. The inspiring new national theme show "America-We Are The FFA" was premiered as well as the new Food For America film, "The Case of the Sneaky Snack."

Alumni Convention

It was also a big year for the Alumni Association, who registered 600 people for their convention on Wednesday. They announced a new membership record of 29,321 members, up 2,000 from last year. Highlights of their convention included talks by Ed Johnson, president of the AgriBroadcasting Network in Ohio and Larry Augenstine, who served on the first national officer team.

The Alumni also auctioned a full-size Chevy pickup that was donated by the Chevrolet Motor Division-Truck Merchandising. The truck was purchased by Frank Rodgers and Son Polled Hereford Farm for $14,100. Of the final selling price, $1,000 went to the Castleford, Idaho, FFA chapter. The remaining $13,100 will be used for FFA Alumni scholarships. The total auction netted over $20,000 for the FFA Alumni.

More details of the convention and a listing of all national winners can be found in a set of *FFA Times* newspapers and the *Convention Proceedings* which were mailed to each FFA chapter immediately after the close of convention. •••

See you in '88!

The 1987-88 National FFA Officers are, left to right: Mickey McCall, eastern region vice president; Bill Hollis, central region vice president; Dunn LeDoux, southern region vice president; Kevin Ochsner, secretary; Kelli Evans, president; and Terri Hames, western region vice president.

Meet Your New National Officers

As the final session of the 1987 National FFA Convention drew to a close, retiring national president Kevin Eblen literally passed a torch of responsibility on to FFA's 1987-88 national president, Kelli Evans, of Hayes Center, Nebraska.

Kelli Evans
President

The 20-year-old agricultural economics junior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is only the second female to be named national FFA president. She served as state vice president and has been involved in various FFA leadership, public speaking, parliamentary procedure and agricultural judging contests.

She raised sheep and beef cattle, and started her own rodeo and horse training business for her FFA program. Evans also works as a research and teaching assistant at the university. She is the daughter of Jack and Linda Evans and is a member at the Curtis Medicine Valley FFA Chapter. Her chapter advisor is Dave Creger.

Kevin Ochsner
Secretary

Kevin Ochsner from Fort Collins, Colorado, served as Colorado state president before being named national secretary. The 20-year-old son of Ken and Roberta Ocshner is a member of the Larimer County FFA Chapter where his advisor is Larry Siegfried.

In 1983, Ochsner won second place in the national FFA prepared public speaking contest. He has also been involved in parliamentary procedure and agricultural judging contests. He raises registered Limousin cattle and received the Colorado FFA beef proficiency award. Kevin is a sophomore at Colorado State University majoring in agricultural journalism/agricultural business.

Mickey McCall
Eastern Region Vice President

After serving as North Carolina state president and president of the Rossman FFA Chapter for three years, Mickey McCall has been named national FFA vice president of the eastern region. The 19-year-old from Balsam Grove, North Carolina, has been involved in various leadership, public speaking and agricultural judging contests, and was a member of the 1984 state-winning forestry judging team.

McCall's FFA agriculture program is a Christmas tree farm of 11,000 trees owned by his father and him. He was selected the 1986 state Forest Management Proficiency award winner in North Carolina. The son of Wayne and Shirley McCall is a sophomore at North Carolina State University, majoring in agricultural education. His advisor is Richard Gates.

Bill Hollis
Central Region Vice President

Besides serving as Illinois state president, Bill Hollis' FFA activities have included directing the Illinois State Leadership Camp and various leadership, public speaking and agricultural judging contests. Hollis, 19, is a freshman at the University of Illinois in animal science with intentions of attending veterinary school. His FFA agriculture programs include swine, poultry and a beef breeding herd.

The central region vice president is the son of Murrel and Kathy Hollis and is a member of the Bushnell Prairie City FFA Chapter where his advisors are Jeff Bryan and C. Eugene McGrew.

Terri Hames
Western Region Vice President

Terri Hames, 20, of Norman, Oklahoma, has served as Oklahoma state president and secretary. She was the state public speaking winner and represented Oklahoma at the National Swine Judging Contest in Austin, Minnesota. Her FFA agriculture program includes registered Hampshire and Suffolk sheep and commercial mixed steers and heifers.

Hames is a junior in agricultural communications at Oklahoma State University where she also works on the campus morning farm show. She is the daughter of David and Sharon Hames and is a member of the Noble FFA Chapter where her advisor is Dale Horton.

Dunn LeDoux
Southern Region Vice President

LeDoux, 20, of Denham Springs, Louisiana, served as state sentinel before being elected as southern region vice president. He has been involved in various leadership, public speaking and judging contests. He was also the national FFA champion livestock showman. His main FFA agriculture program is a firewood business.

LeDoux's interests include agricultural photography and is a research coordinator at Southern Louisiana University where he is a junior in agricultural business. His is the son of Paul and Gwyn LeDoux and is a member of the Denham Springs FFA Chapter where Donald Ray Gill is his advisor. ...

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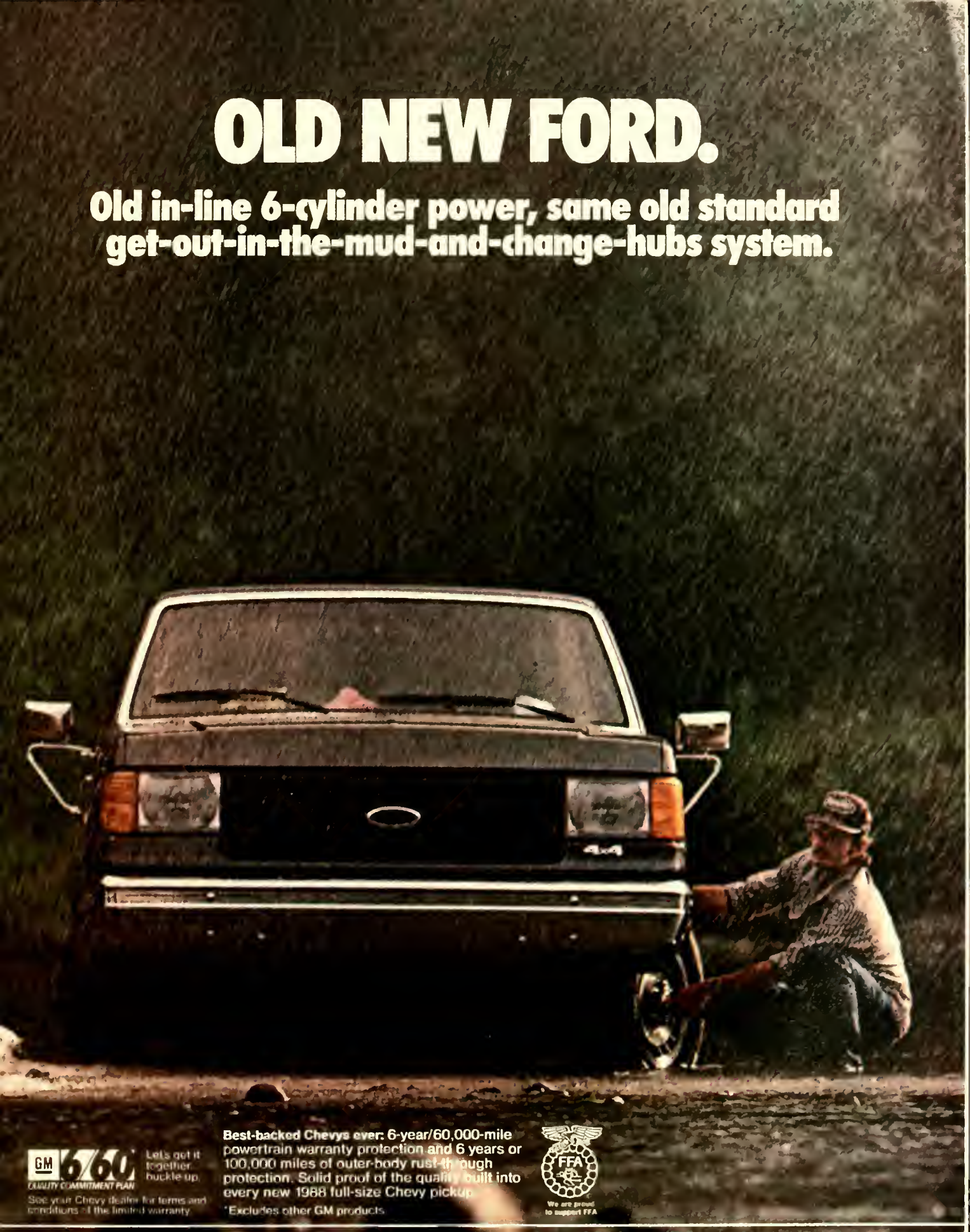

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Crystal McDaniel and her now-famous jacket were on hand at the 60th National FFA Convention in November.

Three Million Jackets, One Spirit

By Mark Cavell

At any national FFA convention, Kansas City becomes a sea of blue corduroy as thousands of FFA members and their jackets flood the city. Each jacket represents a unique FFA member and his or her achievements, but together these thousands of jackets represent the unity and spirit that is the FFA.

This year, one very special FFA jacket stood out from the crowd. The three millionth Official FFA jacket was presented to Crystal McDaniel of Evadale, Texas, during a special ceremony at the 60th FFA Convention. Crystal is a junior at Evadale High School, and a newcomer to the FFA. "When I first learned that the three millionth FFA jacket was mine, I just couldn't believe it!" said Crystal. "Our FFA chapter isn't large, and the thought of being involved on a national level was incredible."

Crystal enrolled in agriculture and the FFA this year after giving up band activities and baton twirling. She did not enter FFA until her junior year, because, "My academic schedule only allowed one elective, and I had to take band in order to serve as head baton twirler," she explains.

She entered FFA when her high school principal and father, Francis, bought some calves. Crystal said, "I wanted to get involved in showing them." Since then, she has shown them at many local and regional shows. She also chairs her chapter's parliamentary procedure committee and is enrolled in the advanced academic program at Evadale.

True Blue

The FFA jacket is perhaps the most recognizable symbol of any agricultural youth organization. The deep national blue corduroy and bold FFA emblem demand attention, and for most members, those colors convey a deep sense of pride and tradition in the organization which it represents. Kevin Eblen, 1986-87 national FFA president from Creston, Iowa, explains, "Zipping up that jacket gives me feelings of pride and self-confidence. Wearing the jacket helps me maintain a positive attitude and a sense of accomplishment."

The Official FFA jacket actually began as the Official FFA Band uniform in 1933, selected by Dr. Gus Lintner of Fredericktown, Ohio. In the past 54 years, the FFA jacket has remained essentially unchanged. However, the members it embraces have changed dramatically.

When the FFA was founded in 1928, the vast majority of FFA members planned on a career in production agriculture after high school. Today, fewer than 8 percent plan on returning to the farm. Advancement in agricultural technology has played an important role in bringing about this change. The spirit contained within the members who have worn these three million FFA jackets has provided corporate, government and education leaders to make these accomplishments possible.

The shear volume of corduroy used to make three million jackets is impressive. For example, Dennis Shafer, National FFA Supply Service director, says that if the corduroy to make 3 million jackets were sewn together, it would create a band four feet wide that would stretch from Los Angeles to New York. The FFA jacket reaches even further through the FFA International program. Jackets are worn around the world by members on student exchanges.

Crystal McDaniel and all FFA members share in the heritage of the FFA jacket with many familiar names: former President Jimmy Carter, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture John Block, scores of congressmen and senators, and many corporate leaders. All these people share a common bond, the spirit and enthusiasm that goes with belonging to America's premier agricultural youth organization— the FFA. •••

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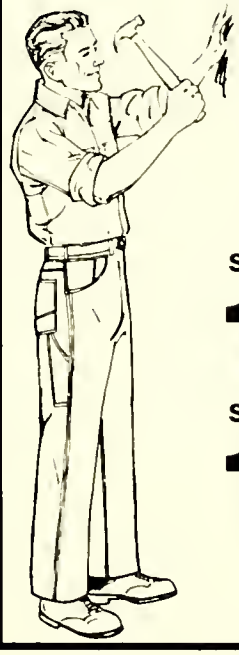

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Playing the Market

High school agriculture students learn advanced marketing skills with the help of commodity reports from a nationwide computer network

By Mike Wilson

The trading is hot and heavy here at the Chicago Commodity Exchange, and James Bartel is worried. He has taken a hedge out on a 5,000-bushel contract of corn and he's not sure whether to sell or hold. He knows it would be a gamble—but then, most marketing moves require some risk, he thinks to himself.

Suddenly, word sweeps across the trading floor that continuing dry weather in Brazil may cause trouble with that country's soybean crop. With this new information, Jim confidently decides to hold his contract another day.

Jim Bartel, 18, is not really working on a trading floor as a grain trader, but he's learning what it takes to become a top-notch marketer.

He and other agriculture classmates at the Juda, Wisconsin, vo-ag department are playing a simulated marketing game that allows them to walk a mile—in this case, for three weeks—in a grain trader's shoes.

What makes this game exciting is that the variables used in the marketing simulation are the actual events taking place every day throughout the world. From the comfort of their agriculture classroom, Juda FFA members follow commodity price changes—updated every 10 minutes—weather reports, marketing news and other events, and attempt to make marketing decisions based on those events using fictitious contracts and commodities.

Students in Juda and all across the nation learn the ins and outs of options, basis, futures contracts, hedging, and other marketing tools with the help of a computer, modem, and AgriData Network, a nationwide network that provides instant commodity prices, analysis from top economists, and agricultural news from around the world.

They're learning that marketing a crop no longer consists of hauling wagons into town and selling for the going price.

"The students select a commodity, and learn how to speculate, either buy, sell, or perform some type of hedge against the commodity by using cattle, hogs, corn or soybeans, for example," says Juda agriculture instructor Allan Brooks.

Students like Kelli Kaderly look forward to using electronic information networks in their marketing simulation. *Photo by Author*

"Then they must follow through on their decisions. They keep track of the market daily and make decisions each day based on basis (the difference in cash price and futures)," he explains.

The marketing skills gained from such "games" are impressive. Students learn to think ahead and sort through many variables. "Now government programs are throwing another twist into marketing," says Brooks. "We make decisions on whether we should hold on to a commodity, get certificates, put it into futures, or put it into storage."

Brooks says quick access to real life information helps keep students interested in learning. Class excitement tends to peak during the three week simulation.

"They do become competitive but it makes them think about marketing," he explains. "They ask a lot of 'what if' questions, sometimes using hindsight to predict what's going to happen in the future."

Brooks also uses marketing lesson plans provided by the AgEd Network, an extension of AgriData specifically designed for vo-ag departments.

"Many lessons deal specifically with marketing activities," he says. "For example, one lesson teaches about PIK-and-roll. That's something all the kids want to learn about. We can get actual information from AgriData network, accessing current reports from Top Farmer, and Doane's

Farm Management," says Brooks.

"It looks like chaos when it's happening, but when the students get into it they really have a lot of fun," he adds. Better yet, they're learning. "It's evident when you talk to them and they start using the proper marketing terminology. Students learn to think ahead and come up with an informed decision."

Making marketing meaningful

Most agriculture instructors agree: teaching marketing is not easy. But Brooks maintains his students are learning because they now realize how important marketing may be to their future.

"The way it's going now with all the government programs, many people must use the markets," says Brooks, who has taught vo-ag in Juda three years. "They're learning to hedge or 'roll over' PIK certificates.

"If students go into farming they're going to need these marketing skills. And in other career areas, this knowlege will become more and more important."

Since it is nationwide, the AgriData network is useful in almost any different type of agricultural setting. Unlike the cash grain markets so common in the midwest, Del Peterson, vo-ag instructor at Santa Maria, California, uses AgriData to access vegetable market reports. "We check the Los Angeles market to see if the price quotes are realistic," he says. "But we really don't get into commodity trading."

The Agriculture science computer room at Santa Maria High School features 15 TRS-80 computers networked together, and another six Tandy model 1000 computers nearby. Like Brooks, Peterson believes the network's wide base of information keeps students interested.

"The biggest advantage of using a computer is to give students the chance to feel comfortable at a computer. Vo-ag students may end up in occupations far from the farm, but the more 'hands on' experience they have to build from, the better," he says.

Brooks says information accessed most frequently in his classroom are daily news reports, livestock and grain futures, and the FFA news network. Students can find information on national FFA activities and contact the National FFA Center to order materials from the FFA Supply Service. They also send letters to other chapters.

He particularly likes the marketing and management teaching materials.

"It's great when you can back up a lesson on corn futures with immediate information from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange," he explains. "The material need only be accessed and localized, and it is ready to be presented."

AgriData is not cheap—about $500-$600 per year, depending on time spent "online." Like most such networks, connect time is indeed money—but Juda students group into twos and threes to keep connect time costs down. "That way it doesn't take a great deal of time to receive information and log off," says Brooks.

Many departments have earned grants that cover such costs. The Juda vo-ag department, for example, had its computer and initial network costs paid for by a Carl Perkins Act project, a nationwide government grant for vocational education.

Other, less expensive and less detailed online computer services are available that provide some of the same services. Computer networks that provide only price updates are relatively inexpensive. Many land grant universities and farm organizations like Farm Bureau offer their own information systems. •••

Weekly Lessons Fine-tune Marketing Skills

One new feature on the AgEd network should help FFA members fine tune commodity marketing skills even more. The Weekly Marketing Project lessons let students experience real world commodity marketing situations in class.

These lessons give students a basic understanding of how the markets work. They contain a summary of the week's markets, questions for discussion, problems to solve and projects for the next week. It's all updated weekly.

Each discussion section contains about five questions relating to markets. They try to help students understand different market terms.

Some lessons include specific problems that let students use marketing knowledge in problem-solving. Other lessons alert students to specific days and events to watch for, such as the release of a USDA report.

An important part of this project is the daily market update. This update gives an overview of cash and futures prices for wheat, corn, cotton, cattle, soybeans and hogs. It also offers comments on the daily activity and outlook for each market.

Carrie Bice and Eric Lewis of Santa Maria, California, check Los Angeles vegetable market reports to see if local price quotes are realistic. *Photo by Del Peterson*

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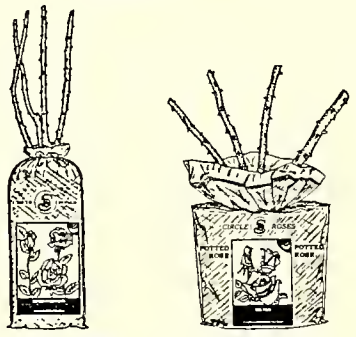

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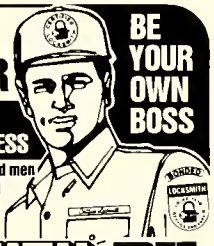

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Tragedy Strikes Idaho Delegation

Denver Crash Claims Lives of FFA Members, Advisor's Wife

What began as a week of national recognition for a group of Melba, Idaho, FFA members ended in tragedy as the Continental Airlines jet carrying them home crashed during takeoff in a Denver snowstorm November 15.

The group was returning from national FFA convention held in Kansas City, Missouri, when their jet, Flight 1713, apparently flipped during takeoff from Stapleton International Airport in Denver.

At press time, two Melba FFA members were reported killed in the crash-- Janine Legerwood, 17, and Sherry Nelson, 18. The crash also claimed the life of Tami Daniel, wife of Melba FFA chapter advisor David Daniel.

Mr. Daniel and eight other Idaho FFA members survived the crash, but suffered a wide range of physical injuries. Surviving were: Angie Tlucek, 17; Jeff Hoagland, 16; Patrick Lovelady, 17 and Antone Noe, 20, all of Melba. Also surviving were Michelle Davis, 20, of Middleton; Christopher Davis, and his brother, Wayne Davis of Kuna, and Laura Hobbs, 20, of Eagle. Hobbs was Idaho's 1987 national officer candidate.

The victims of the crash had gone to National FFA Convention in Kansas City to receive a number of honors and to compete in national judging contests. Mrs. Daniel had gone to see her husband receive his Honorary American Farmer degree. Antone Noe, Michelle Davis and Wayne Davis were awarded the American Farmer Degree. Nelson, Hoagland and Lovelady had competed in the national Agricultural Mechanics Contest. Ledgerwood, Tlucek and Chris Davis had competed in the national Farm Business Management Contest.

Larry Case, national FFA advisor, said, "We are deeply saddened at the loss of these fine FFA members and Mrs. Daniels. They were true leaders in their community, exemplified by their achievements in the FFA. Their loss is being felt by fellow FFA members and education professionals across the country, many of whom had the opportunity to know them only days before this tragic incident."

Representatives from the National FFA Organization traveled to Melba to represent the FFA at memorial services and to offer support and encouragement for the injured. Flags at the National FFA Center were flown at half-staff in honor of the deceased.

Memorial Fund Established for Crash Victims

The National FFA Organization has established a fund in memory of the FFA members and family members who lost their lives in the Denver air disaster, Sunday, November 15.

Contributions to the FFA memorial fund should be sent to:

FFA-Memorial Fund
P.O. Box 5117
Madison, WI 53705

All contributions will be given to the Melba FFA/School Officials, Melba, Idaho, for use as local needs dictate.

AIC Youth Trustees

Melissa Tyler, South Carolina state vice president, and John Lang, Indiana state treasurer, have been selected as 1987-88 Youth Associate Trustees for the American Institute of Cooperation (AIC).

As AIC Youth Associate Trustees, Tyler and Lang will be youth spokespersons for cooperatives at a variety of meetings throughout the country in the coming yeatr., They also will represent youth on the AIC Board of Trustees.

Tyler and Lang were selected from 350 other youths for this honor during the Youth Scholar program of AIC's National Institute on Cooperative Education. The Institute, held August 11-14 in St. Louis, brought more than 1,200 people from across the country to learn more about the issues facing agriculture and farmer cooperatives today.

The Youth Associate Trustees are selected on the basis of their leadership skills, speaking ability, poise and knowledge of cooperatives.

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Center Pivot Savings

John Rygh computes how to pump less water saving more money

By Andrew Markwart

Water—some crop producers get enough rain throughout their growing season that their only worry is how much they get and when they get it. Growers in the Hermiston, Oregon, growing area, have different worries. Through irrigation, they can regulate how much water they get and when, but they pay dearly for it.

Hermiston is tucked in the northeast corner of Oregon where the rainfall isn't as plentiful as areas like Portland, which are closer to the Pacific shore. From the air, the Hermiston's landscape resembles groupings of dials and gauges from the center pivot irrigation systems used by local growers. This type of irrigation system is anchored in the center with a boom that stretches out an eighth to a quarter mile. Nozzles attached to the boom spray water on crops below.

In the years when energy costs were small compared to other input costs, growers would equip their systems with high-pressure nozzles and, as best they could, adjust the system to get the right amount of water on their crops. Then the energy crisis came in the 1970s, driving utility and fuel prices up. Suddenly, the pumping cost for irrigation systems became an expensive item. Growers started looking for ways to save pumping costs.

Now the rigs are being converted little by little by growers to save money. Irrigation parts dealers offer computer printouts of recommended new low pressure nozzles for conversion of old rigs or the setup of new ones.

Low Pressure Salesman

FFA member John Rygh, 17, has programmed a computer software package that, like the parts dealers, tracks down inefficient nozzles, but with two major differences; his provides better information at a lower cost. He started the project when his father wanted to convert his center pivot from high-pressure to low-pressure nozzles to save money. What they ran into was an $80-plus price tag for a computer printout for each irrigation system.

Being a capable 15-year-old computer buff, John decided to help save some money and write his own program. People were skeptical. When John approached a local parts dealer for some rate of application charts to start the programming process, the dealer asked what he was going to do with the information. After an explanation, the dealer chuckled and gave him the charts saying, "This ought to keep him busy for a while."

With the help of extension agent Gary Prothero, who specializes in computers, John not only wrote a program on his IBM PCjr that his father could use, but made it superior to the "professional printouts" for about half the cost. This is how the computer program works: A producer wants a specific amount of precipitation to fall on his crops for maximum growth. He also wants to do this for the least amount of money he can.

John starts by asking the grower his desired gallons of water per acre and some other important factors (including evaporation rates and how much drag different pipes have on water flow), and plugs the information in his program. Then he presents the grower with the final product— a printout that tells him what equipment will achieve that water rate for the least amount of money.

John Rygh checks one of the low-impact nozzles that is saving producers money in irrigation costs.

Photo by Author

Exclusive Feature

One feature of John's program that others printouts don't include is a figure for total gallons per minute delivered at each nozzle. A local corn producer, Johnny Thomas, Sr., was having problems with his system decided to give John's program a try. It worked. Thomas' corn crop came back in time for a good harvest.

The program also impressed the judges at the 1987 FFA Computers in Agriculture Conference, held earlier this year in Washington, D.C., where he was named one of the nation's top five individuals who have found innovative ways to use computers in agriculture. To reach the conference, John also won Oregon's state computer contest. He is also computerizing the FFA record book system for the state of Oregon.

Now he's trying to market the printouts as he enters college. John earned the money to attend college this fall by growing and marketing fresh produce, mostly at a local farmers' market. He has learned the fine points of managing hired help and displaying vegetables to out-sell his competition.

John hopes to merge interest in growing plants with his computer science knowledge for a future in agronomy. But that's in the future—for now, he's trying to help farmers maximize their center pivot savings. •••

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National FFA scholarships are available for 1988 graduating seniors. Scholarships range from $500 to $25,000 each.

Get your application form from your local FFA Advisor about January 1, 1988. If not available from your advisor send in the coupon below.

There is no limit to the number of applications per chapter. Selection is based on the application information. You do not need to be a State/National "leader" or award winner to apply.

Scholarships are available for most agribusiness/agriculture majors, for two or four year institutions and for members in all States.

Scholarships are available regardless of creed, sex or country of origin.

Expected scholarships for 1988 are listed below, by the total amount of contributions given to the FFA scholarship program through the National FFA Foundation.

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Chapter Scoop

Before the **Willard,** OH, FFA members left for the Farm Science Review exhibits near Columbus, the ag teacher issued them a list of questions which they had to get answers to during the day.

Work day for the **Swiss Hills,** OH, FFA is an every-member-show-up-day to clean up the fairgrounds.

Alumni members came to discuss the importance of FFA to the chapter members of the **Orlando-Colonial** FFA in Florida.

Whiteside, IL, AVC Chapter provided the animals for a petting zoo at the local mall.

Officers barbequed chicken for the first meeting of the **East Rowan,** NC, Chapter on a gas grill made by FFA members.

The FFA Chapter honored **Brown City,** MI, area farmers with a float in the salute to agriculture parade.

Members of the **Culpeper Junior** FFA in Virginia were invited to be hosts for the agricultural mechanics exhibits at the state fair.

To cool off from the summer heat the **Advance,** MO, Chapter went ice skating.

Fourteen members of the **West Chester,** OH, FFA helped prepare the grounds for the 40th annual charity horse show in their township. Members mowed, cleaned fence rows, painted, raked and disked the ring.

The **David City,** NE, Chapter built a chain saw safety display for the county fair. It included safety practices you should use when operating a chain saw. And hints on how to make a proper cut. Chapter-published handouts were given to those who stopped to learn.

Early in September, the **Calaveras,** CA, Chapter had a watermelon feed over lunch break in the school shop.

Rusk, TX, sponsored a fajita dinner for the high school faculty.

Thomas, OK, invited *Kati Hanni,* an exchange student, to speak at the chapter meeting about agriculture in Finland.

A new Radio Shack TRS-80 was donated to the **Monroeville,** OH, FFA by local businessman John Crumb.

When the **Genoa,** OH, Chapter played putt-putt golf after the summer meeting, Advisor Schneider surprised everyone with a hole-in-one.

At the **East Brunswick Vo-Tech,** NJ, FFA banquet, they awarded honorary membership to Samuel Garrison, assistant secretary of agriculture for New Jersey, and to Joseph Colombo, assistant superintendent of the county vocational schools in the state.

Glencoe, OK, annual picnic at the vo-ag building to kick off the start of school included a cookout, softball game and vespers program.

Miller City, OH, FFA members helped with a whole hog barbeque on a local farm and then went swimming and played basketball while it was cooking.

Kingwood, TX, FFA held its second fishing contest for kids, ten and under. Proceeds went to "Jerry's Kids." Prizes went to various winners including the youngest to catch a fish.

The **Semmes,** AL, Chapter planted an oak on their high school campus in honor of the United States Constitution's 200th anniversary.

Ripley, OK, sold $11,000 worth of fireworks and netted $1,350. The hard work paid off for the members and parents.

Indian Valley Chapter in Gnadenhutten, OH, would like to know if any other chapter has a member with feet bigger than *Shawn Sprowl.* He's only a freshman and his shoe size is 17!

Hampshire County, WV, Chapter won the state parliamentary procedure contest and will likely go on to the national invitational run by **Carthage,** MO, FFA.

Hatch, NM, FFA accepted the job of parking cars for football games, according to Reporter *Jennifer Tomlinson.*

Gervais, OR, FFA had open shop nights at school so members would work on fair entries. More members were able to do extra things for the fair plus work together and learn new skills.

Besides the officers, the **Myrtle Point,** OR, Chapter sent two freshmen to leadership camp.

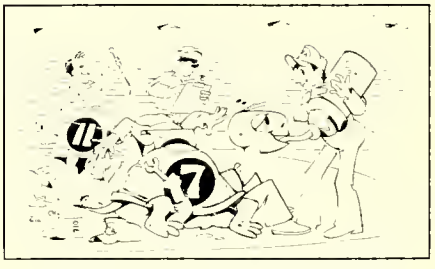
As you would imagine, they have an apple judging contest in the state of Washington. The **Chelan** FFA has a team in preparation for the event.

Fauquier, VA, FFA developed plans and installed a 20 x 30 wash rack at the county fairgrounds.

Members of the **Minisink Valley,** NY, Chapter worked for four days to build a pole barn to house the animals for their annual farm fair. Over 1,000 students from K-4 grades came out to see and touch and hear. Even the kittens ended up with a good new home.

St. Cloud, MN, Secretary *Jean Glatzel* writes that they really enjoy getting "the Scoop" on things all the other chapters are up to. Their chapter had a member/alumni picnic in August.

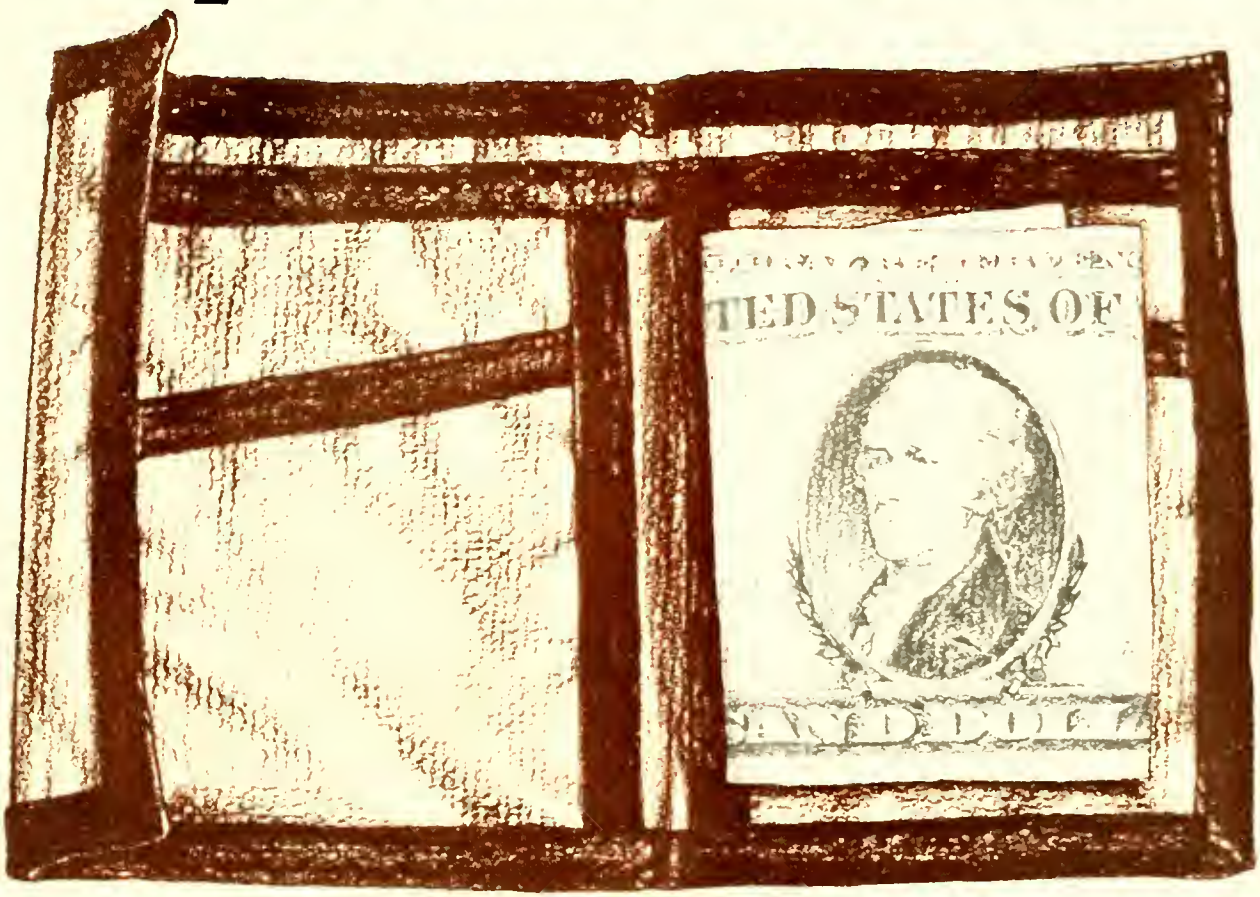
The whole **Nemo Vista,** AR, Chapter helped dehorn and castrate cattle this fall.



Prague, OK, FFA helped the Chamber of Commerce with the Fourth of July celebration by operating a turtle race.

Don't delay getting in news, notes or nonsense about your chapter. But try to make it original or different. Not the same old things every chapter does. Share those great ideas!

How to pocket $1,000 cash.



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The Right Angle

A new FFA handbook offers fresh ideas for chapter reporters

By Shirley Sokolosky

FFA has changed. We've evolved from an organization you once joined only if you were a farm boy to one that offers a smorgasbord of agricultural career opportunities to both rural and urban, both male and female.

The problem is that many people don't know we've changed. People who are otherwise well-informed may be overheard saying things like "I don't belong there because I don't have any pigs in my back yard" or "My daughter wants to be a lawyer—she couldn't possibly learn anything from FFA."

FFA needs to present an accurate reflection to the public, depicting what a diverse, opportunity-oriented group we are. We need to convince students and parents that FFA has something to offer them. We need to show our communities that we can help improve the quality of life and seek support for vocational agriculture, so when programs are threatened, the community can stand up and say, "FFA and high school agriculture are necessary here." To quote an old public relations saying, "We need to get caught in the act of doing something good."

Getting Ink and Air

Promoting goodwill is a tall order. The chapter reporter can't sit home watching Jetson reruns and expect newspaper editors to come banging at the door. The advisor can't send a list of local contest winners to a large TV station and just expect them to read it on the air. Public relations (PR) is an active, aggressive effort to get your news out, and good chapter reporters will attest to their busy schedule.

Consider what you're competing with. Newspapers, magazines, TV and radio have one major consideration: What will capture their audience's interest? The answer is pretty obvious. Hard news, or what has just happened, is why most people check out the media. What caused the car wreck? Did the chemical spill hurt anybody? Others have specific interest. Will there be a freeze tonight? Did my football team win? And then there are certified attention-getters: Miss America, Princess Diana and Spuds MacKenzie.

Like it or not, that's your competition. (If you live in a very small community where the paper publishes every word you give them, the idea of competition isn't quite as important. However, you should read on to get new ideas to improve your PR efforts.)

HOW DO I MAKE OUR CONTESTS SOUND AS INTERESTING AS THEY REALLY ARE?
I DON'T WANT TO WRITE THE SAME OLD THING, BUT WHERE DO I START?
FFA
CHIPS
PLAINVILLE GAZETTE
HERSHINGER

Start by examining your old ideas about what stories you should submit to the paper. In FFA's new publication, the *Reporter's Handbook*, Nicholas Kristof, a former FFA member who is Hong Kong Bureau Chief for the *New York Times*, says reporters should do their best to get out of the rut of "reporting contest results and nothing else." He suggests that while an article about your chapter's third-place finish in a dairy judging contest should be written, you should also come up with fresh, new ideas.

"Write about members with interesting projects, or write about what your chapter thinks of some important agricultural issue," says Kristof, a former state officer from Oregon. And, since people like to read about other people, he advises using any excuse to write about interesting people—a chapter officer, a contest winner, an advisor, even a parent or alumnus.

Use your creativity to make stories interesting, no matter what the subject. Kristof says that you'll have to list the names of the winning parliamentary procedure team, "but also write about the whoop of delight as the winners' names are called." Try to inject some life, he says, "into what would otherwise be dull, routine stories."

Another way to compete in the crowded news arena is to make sure your chapter is conducting up-to-date activities that truly serve the community. If no one has ever sponsored a CPR clinic in your town, the fact that your chapter is doing so would be news. If you've presented the same program, year-after-year, you shouldn't be surprised if the media don't consider it to be hot news.

We're not suggesting you stop doing tried-and-true events. Consider, however, doing something new for its news value. Building Our American Communities (BOAC) is a perfect example of a program for which you should be able to get lots of news coverage. Your chapter identifies a public need and acts upon it. Don't keep that work a secret. Splash it on every publication and airwave that will feature you.

Therein lies a problem for many chapters. You're doing good things, but you can't get the media to notice. Perhaps you're located in a metropolitan area or you have contacts who just don't see FFA as being important.

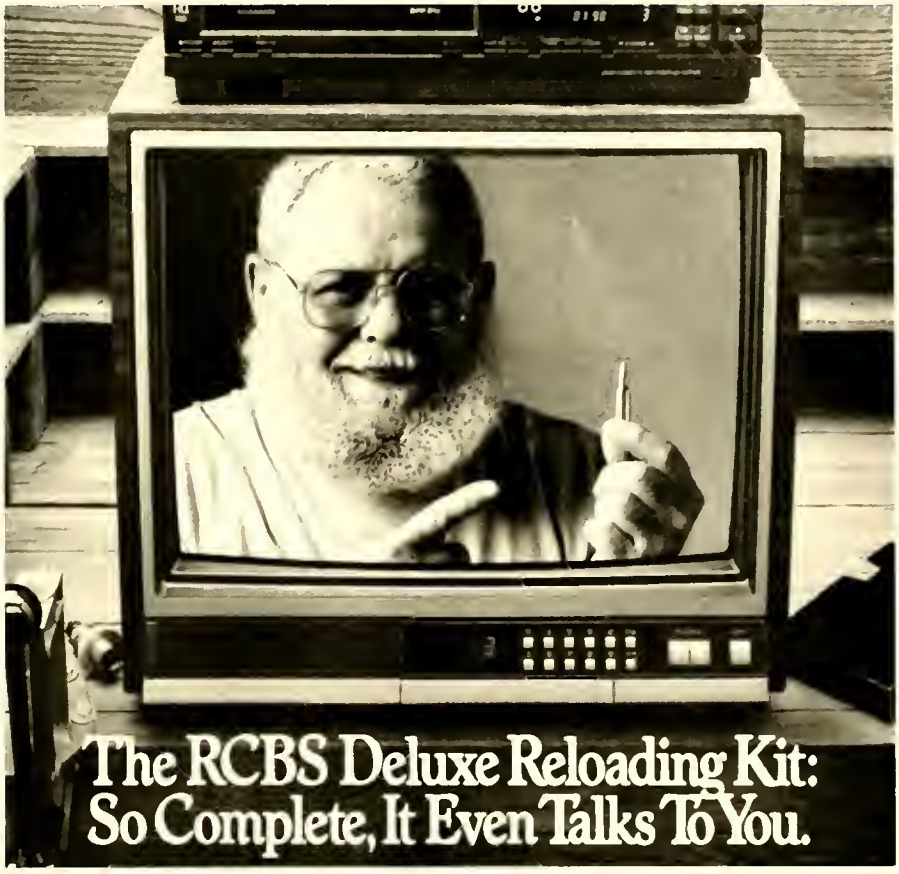
The Right Angle

The first rule is "Don't give up." If a publication or station acts uninterested in your news, learn from them. Find out why the material you submitted was not used. Don't get mad, get smart. Be ready the next time with something you think they can use.

And, let's face it, some media just don't care about contest results and other information that's common to lots of organizations. You need to figure out what makes FFA unique. Think about it, and come up with story ideas. For example, one facet of FFA that seems to amaze adults is the advanced public speaking experience of members. If the fact that you have a participant in the state contest isn't enough, perhaps the story will be complete when the editor finds out there are 25 other people in the chapter who can stand up in front of a crowd and give a ten-minute speech without so much as a sweaty palm. Look for new, unusual perspectives.

Never has the role of the chapter reporter been more important. That's why the *Reporter's Handbook* has been totally rewritten and redesigned. Funded as a special project of the National FFA Foundation, the new handbook emphasizes the importance of writing the kind of stories and taking the kind of photographs that will be published. It explores the how-to's of preparing news stories, photos and cutlines, scrapbooks, displays, slide shows and special events. Profiled in the book are former FFA members such as Nicholas Kristof who have taken their early communication experiences and extended them into careers.

The handbook isn't meant to teach you everything you need to know about public relations. Public relations, like anything else worth learning, takes time. The sooner you begin polishing your skills the better you will be at telling your chapter's story. The FFA's future depends on it. •••



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Don Hartley and the students of Loma Prieta Alternative High School. *Photo by Author*

The Green Connection

Urban agriculture students proud of work, business

By Steve Barilotti

A BLOND young man of 16, hammer in hand, inspects a keystone gusset overhead and pronounces it good. The others agree. The skeleton of the greenhouse finished, the rest of the construction crew hunker down on the bare earth floors and scrutinize their handiwork.

They look at it with a mixture of pride and criticism. There have been some mistakes. Some posts were cut a little short and there are places where the cross beams don't quite line up. It's okay, but it could be better—which is not unlike how the parents view these teenagers. Basically good. Could be better.

A lot of them have been in trouble. Big trouble. Fighting, drugs, chronic truancy, disruptive behavior—general bad attitude. Many are on probation. That's why they're here at the Ark. It's the last chance these students have to salvage some kind of education before they enter the competitive job marketplace.

So what do you teach them? They're not interested in books or classrooms, and traditional forms of education have gotten poor results.

For Don Hartley the answer is simple. Teach them to build and to grow. But not abstract build-and-grow as in building values and growing emotionally, but the literal, as in to build a greenhouse and grow herbs. Then after you grow the herbs you sell them to real markets for real money which goes back to them in the form of new equipment or just plain spending cash. The values will follow.

"The educational system is a mess," says Hartley. "The dropout rate is as high as it's ever been and the literacy rate is declining. These kids are just not getting the skills they need to survive on this planet. What I try to convey to my students is a sense that what they are learning has an immediate application—that they can get a job or even start a business on what they've learned here."

Hartley's three-year-old programs at the Ark and Loma Prieta alternative high schools in the city school district at Santa Cruz, California, are a unique blend of education, capitalism and whole earth ideology. Hartley shows his students at the Ark how to produce high quality herbs and vegetables on a small scale and still turn a respectable profit.

"The trick is to fill niches," says Hartley. "Grow the high ticket specialty items that agribusiness can't compete with successfully on a small scale. Herbs are a good bet. Basil and chives are always in demand because you can sell to either markets or restaurants."

Sparrow Johnson, co-manager of Westside Community Market in Santa Cruz, says that she is ecstatic over the quality and consistency of the produce the students grow. "The produce is first quality," Johnson says. "The kids make the deliveries and try to be very professional about the receipts. They're very enthusiastic."

Johnson says the program's products, vegetables and herbs, are not available elsewhere on a year-round basis—things such as basil, red butter lettuce, baby vegetables and the primeval-looking but delicious broccoli Romanesco. "With their greenhouse they can bring me off-season produce when nobody else is growing it," Johnson says. "We always sell out of their stuff."

There are 15 students in the Garden Laboratory program, 11 boys and 4 girls. They work in the greenhouse or the garden during the day as part of their regular school curriculum, but after school they are paid as independent contractors to package produce and make deliveries. They've had business cards made up and call their marketing group "The Green Connection."

Sales of the produce is generating about $200 a month, but that figure could climb to four times that amount once the second greenhouse is completed and on-line.

"A lot depends on the weather and our lack of competition at this point," says Hartley.

Although Hartley is technically a science teacher, his instruction is not limited to a narrow field. Since the students are involved in the project from the planning of the market crop to the harvesting and sales of the finished produce, Hartley must teach his kids a wide spectrum of subjects, ranging from basic business English to integrated pest management.

"Most of these kids have never seen the back of a restaurant or the storeroom of a market," Hartley says. "So I show them how the real world operates. I let them go in and negotiate produce prices with the managers or the head chefs. At first they're pretty nervous, but pretty soon they're out there haggling like pros. They've sweated over this stuff and they're not going to let it go cheap.

"For a lot of these kids it's the first time they have had something they could call their own. It also imparts a sense of responsibility and ownership. You'll be less likely to spray-paint a building if you've just spent the better part of a weekend helping to build it."

To accomplish financial independence for his program Hartley keeps a close eye on the produce market. Every Tuesday, Hartley and his students take field trips to other organic farming ventures around Santa Cruz and Monterey.

"This gives the kids a chance to see who their competition is—how they operate

and how The Green Connection fits in the marketplace."

Immediate plans for The Green Connection call for a fleet of bicycles to make delivery runs. Eventually, Hartley would like to add chickens and set up aquaculture ponds with an eye towards making his own immediate school district largely self-sufficient in terms of food. He admits, however, that it would take a lot of start-up money to get the aquaculture program off the ground.

"You'll be less likely to spray-paint a building if you've just spent the better part of a weekend helping to build it."
—Instructor Don Hartley

"It costs a lot to have hands-on instruction. You need to have more teachers and more equipment and all of these things cost money. But in the long run you end up with a much better education.

"It also provides jobs. Small scale farming is labor intensive and requires lots of people to make it work. It's not for everyone, I admit, but a lot of people get a great satisfaction out of growing things when it's done on a human scale."

As important as the financial aspect of the program is to Hartley, it's even more critical that he convey a sense of love and respect of the earth to his students. Although he doesn't actively preach his ideas of agro-ecology, he does show them how they work, which in the long run is much more effective.

"I want to show them that the decisions they make now will have an impact later on — good or bad. Sure, you can pump a lot of petro-chemicals into the soil to increase crop yields in the short term, but in the long run you lose out because the land eventually becomes burned out. It's only good sense and good economics to upgrade the soil year after year with sound organic farming techniques."

Back in the new greenhouse the construction crew continue their relaxed critique. Actually there is an air of marvel about them, as if they can't quite believe that they actually built this thing. These four teenagers, who if given the chance a few months ago would have cut class to hang out at the beach and smoke dope, are now actually staying after school to make sure their structure is properly constructed and protected.

They're proud of it, sure. But they knew they could do it from the start. No sweat. And besides, it's just a greenhouse.

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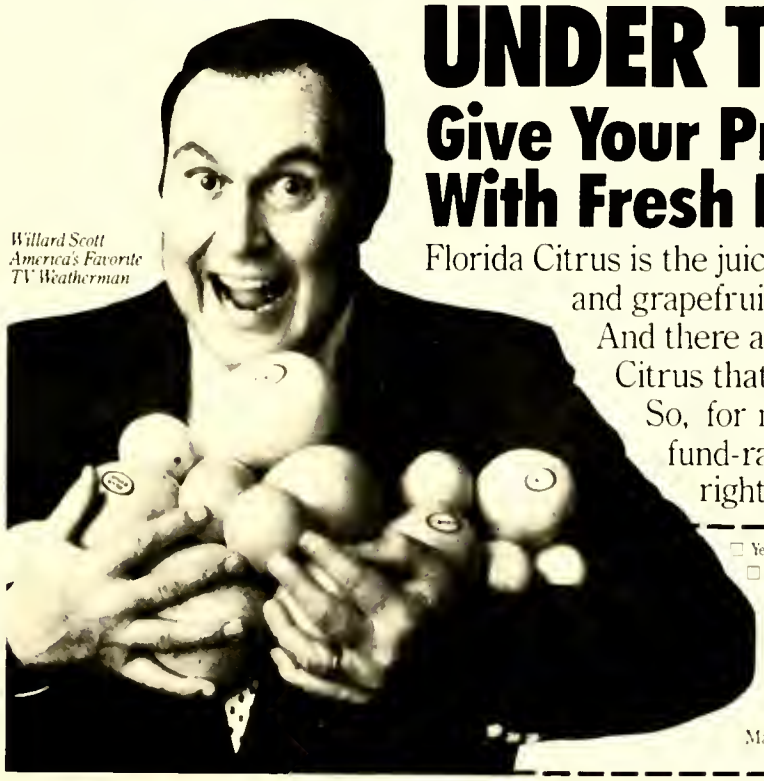

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New Uses for Surplus Corn

By Kim Kaplan and Sean Adams, Agricultural Research Service

RESEARCH on new products from surplus commodities continues to pay off for agriculture. One such project by USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) turned surplus corn into super slurper—a substance that can absorb 1,400 times its own weight in moisture—and at the same time into new jobs in rural communities.

ARS scientist William Doane led a team of researchers in developing super slurper from cornstarch in 1974 at the Northern Regional Research Center in Peoria, Illinois. Since its development, super slurper has been used in body powder, diapers and sanitary napkins; as a nonmetallic electrical conductor in batteries; and in other projects as well.

One rapidly expanding use for super slurper is in industrial fuel filters.

About four years ago, the Central Illinois Manufacturing Company in Bement, a small agricultural community in the center of the state, first developed these filters using a super slurper material it calls hydrosorb. The super slurper takes water out of the fuel as it passes through the filter.

Today, the company's hydrosorb filters are big sellers, according to Jim Womer, marketing director for CIMCo's petroleum division. The company makes 26,000 fuel filters a month using super slurper.

CIMCo has grown from about 25 employees four years ago to more than 100 today. The company's sales have grown to the point where other companies are buying hydrosorb to use in their filters. Womer says the demand was so great that his company licensed another one to make hydrosorb for the filters.

Super slurper has also led to the creation of about 50 new jobs and the revitalization of a closed-down 30,000-square-foot bowling alley and recreation center into a thriving factory in Smelterville, a small town in Idaho.

The bowling alley/recreation complex originally shut down when the closing of the town's largest employer, Bunker Hill Mining and Smelting, Inc., in 1981 left the town with high unemployment.

But 18 months ago, the Marshall family, which owned the recreation complex, started Polysorb, Inc., to manufacture a whole line of products all based on super slurper.

Chemist Felix Otey displays a large sheet of biodegradable plastic, made from starch and petroleum-based polymers. *Photos by USDA Agricultural Research Magazine*

Business has been booming for sales of Polysorb's medical cold packs, products to remove moisture from fuel tanks and bulk absorbants for agricultural uses.

This super slurper flake has swollen into a soft, rubbery chunk that is over 99 percent water. Made in flakes, films, powder or mats from cornstarch, super slurper can absorb 1,400 times its weight in water.

"We were in the black at the end of our first year, with about $3 million in revenue," says Cliff Marshall, president of Polysorb. "And we are considering a multimillion dollar expansion soon so we can add new product lines based on super slurper."

Another use for cornstarch is in plastics developed and patented by ARS chemist Felix Otey (now retired). These plastics have potential used in trashcan liners, garden and farm mulches and packaging for fast foods, says Don Fisk, president of Agri-Tech Industries, Inc., of Gibson City, Illinois. Agri-Tech was licensed in May to develop the cornstarch plastic for commercial use. Fisk says the company hopes to have a product ready for commercial manufacture in 1988.

Aside from its utilization of cornstarch, Otey's plastics have an environmental benefit: They are biodegradable. Doane says that preliminary laboratory studies showed the plastics would break down—if used as mulch in the soil, for example. Agri-Tech plans large-scale studies with different blends of the plastic to confirm this.

The potential for the starch-based plastic is good news for corn farmers, some of whom are helping fund research through the Illinois Corn Marketing Board. •••

Their mother is a champion and Freddy Wells has high hopes for this littler of Walker coonhound puppies.

Photo by Author

How 'Bout Them Dawgs!

By Charlotte Anne Smith

FREDDY Wells is pinning all his hopes on his dogs.

The 17-year-old senior from Liberty FFA Chapter, Mounds, Oklahoma, placed second in Oklahoma's Specialty Animal Production proficiency program in 1986. This year he was selected western region FFA Specialty Animal Production proficiency winner. He has high hopes his rather unusual project will lead him to a State Farmer degree and ultimately, an American Farmer degree. That's quite a bit to expect from a project as unusual as raising and showing Walker coonhounds.

Freddy started this project—which has turned into a lucrative business—almost by accident.

"I didn't even know there were any raccoons in Oklahoma," he said. "I was 14 and a neighbor, Herb Church, talked me into going hunting with him one night. I had such a good time, I've been hunting ever since."

He now makes about 100 dog shows a year, starting in February, with most of them occurring in the summer. He usually hauls three dogs, the show limit, and has two friends show the other two dogs. Freddy competes in bench and field trial shows, mostly the latter.

His head stud dog, Clifton River Rock, was reserved world champion, Oklahoma State champion, Kentucky State champion and Blue Tick grand champion in 1984, repeating the Blue Tick win in 1986. Rock is also rated as Grand Nite champion, the highest degree he can receive in field trials and Grand Show champion, the highest in bench shows.

"I don't get to show Rock any more. I would like to, but I just can't take the risk," Freddy said. "When you can get a $200 stud fee and are breeding 60 dogs a year, you can't run the risk of getting him hurt while hunting."

His top female, Oh Leading Lady, also has an impressive list of wins including the American Coon Hunters Association Little World champion female in 1985. Freddy is the first person under age 18 to win that title. Lady has also won Oklahoma State championship in 1985 and 1986, the Professional Kennel Club (PKC) World Silver Cup, Top Ten Oklahoma champion and second place at the Ada Walker Days, the largest Walker show in America. She also won the World Youth championship at Youth Dog Week.

Freddy usually has around 50 dogs at any given time, depending on the number of pups. "I've got two other kennels," he said. "One is at Oklahoma City and one at Okmulgee. The two people who show for me take care of them. I leave one dog being shown at each and they train five or six pups in the off season. I usually have about 15 litters of pups a year that average eight to ten per litter."

While competition may be rather rugged—running over rough terrain at night—the living conditions for Freddy's dogs aren't. The dogs live in an air-conditioned and automatically heated house which has an automatic fly spray system for summer. It contains 14 runs which allows the dogs to be inside or out according to their preference. He also has ten large pens with individual houses.

Freddy has a total of $4,400 in scholarships awaiting his graduation from high school, $4,000 of which came with the National Youth championship. He plans to study business administration.

Although coonhounds aren't your usual FFA project, they've certainly been good to Freddy Wells. •••

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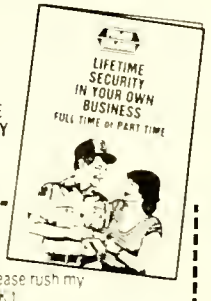

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FFA In Action

For the Birds

The landscape display built by members of the Rogers FFA Chapter in Puyallup, Washington, won grand champion at the Washington State FFA Exhibition. Designed to draw wildlife to urban backyards, the entry was planned and built by the members. Front row, left to right, are Wayne Wienholz; Shawn Roguess; Bruce Sweeney, chapter secretary; Jay Hansen; and Erick Forstrom. Second row, Jeff Brewer; Derek Thompson; John Duma; Steve Brown, vice president; and Phil Balston, president. Far right is Advisor Pete Montson.

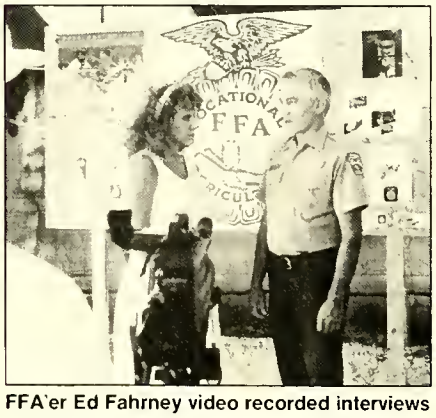
Speak Up For Ag Careers

When you want to sell a product, you advertise.

And that is what members of the Franklin County, Pennsylvania, FFA did during FFA Day at the Franklin County Fair.

This year, in addition to individual competition with dairy animals and hosting the popular baby barnyard, FFA members participated in activities designed to promote public awareness of opportunities in agricultural careers.

In the chapter's first all-out promotional effort at the fair, a display tent was set up with materials about FFA, college representatives in the vocational agricultural field and promotional items. A group of baby chicks also attracted the younger set to the FFA tent.



FFA'er Ed Fahrney video recorded interviews of local agriculture leaders conducted for the chapter by TV announcer Lisa Kline of WCBG.

In the area of the baby barnyard, a day-long series of interviews, conducted by Lisa Kline, a weekend announcer at WCBG, were videotaped. Additionally, those videotaped were also interviewed for local radio broadcasts.

FFA advisors reported a tremendous and enthusiastic response from those who were asked to be interviewed and those videotaped included: the state FFA treasurer; forest director for the local area; area farmer and member of the Franklin County Area Vocational Technical School Board; a member of the dairy science department at Delaware Valley College; soil conservationist; principal; Farm Credit Service; University Extension Service; agriculture instructor; agribusinessman; Star Greenhand; guidance counselor; state representative; county farmer; banker; co-op officer; and state FFA advisor. *(By Shawn Rockwell, education editor for* The Record Herald*)*

Campfire Leadership

For their second annual Ysleta FFA Leadership Camp, the El Paso, Texas, members camped out for three days in the Gila Wilderness of New Mexico. They were accompanied by their advisor and four FFA Alumni.

Chapter President Ron Gil and a camp committee laid out responsibilities and supplies.

One highlight of the camp was the "campfire" session held the first night. Members shared their hopes and feelings concerning the FFA and their individual goals and hopes for the future. It was a very emotional and moving time for the members and adults alike.

An educational tour was set up for the Tyrone, New Mexico, Phelp's Dodge Copper Mine operation. Members went on a three-hour tour of the complete operation with special emphasis placed on the mine's use of the land for agricultural purposes and its reclamation efforts.

The traditional FFA football game was held in the city park in Silver City, New Mexico. Advisor Forsythe was bruised and battered but scored two touchdowns in the game which was supposed to be "light contact."

The purpose of the camp was to introduce new members to the FFA, its goals and purposes as well as develop leadership for a successful year in the program of work. After three days, the members and adults returned to El Paso with many fond memories and anticipating a great year for the Ysleta program.

Two-Day Event for California Officers

California's Central Region held its Officer Leadership Conference at Beyer High School in Modesto, October 3-4. State president Kathy Almond and the rest of the California officers put on workshops for chapter officers.

Central region president Sayf Munir and his officer team assisted the state officers in their workshops and in planning the conference. The advisors explored new computer software and teaching videos.

California State Reporter Mario Flores explains the importance of chapter reporters.

(Continued on Page 46)

A NEW NATIONAL YOUNG FARMER CAMPAIGN WITH SOME FUELISH ADVICE.

Fight Fire with Care

FUEL FIRES CAN BE CONTAINED IF WE CARE ENOUGH TO BE CAREFUL!

That's the message of the new Heart Safety Decal, here being applied to a farm fuel tank by a cooperating Young Farmer, FFA member and farm family.

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There is a pattern to fuel fires. Forgetfulness starts most of them. In handling fuel, remember to be careful.

Safe practices are best remembered if they are simple, easy to carry out -- and if there is a handy reminder.

The Brand 'em II program educates for fuel safety and places the heart decal to remind folks to care.

A FIRST FOR COOPERATION -- -- A COMBINATION FOR SUCCESS.

The National Young Farmer Educational Association and FFA, working together, can create a most effective educational and promotional effort to help farm families.

Young Farmers are ready. In some areas, FFA Chapters can take initiative and leadership. In either case, the family we save may be our own.

We all care for family and friends. The trouble is knowing what to do -- or remembering to do it.

Heart Decals remind us to care. If we care, we learn and we remember. If we know and remember, we'll be careful.

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FFA In Action

Full Cabinet

Wednesday, September 9, was an exciting day for the Florida Association state officers and members of the Bunnell FFA Chapter who recently won the state BOAC contest. During a cabinet meeting at the state capitol in Tallahassee, Governor Bob Martinez presented the Bunnell Chapter with the Governor's Citation for their community service. These chapter members helped restore wildlife and residential areas after devastating forest fires destroyed surrounding homes and local acreage.

By conducting door-to-door surveys and contacting people who had lost their homes, these FFA members were able to determine which types of houses were more susceptible to fire damage and they actually helped to rebuild the residential and surrounding forest areas. They were also instrumental in educating home owners to potential fire hazards.

During the meeting, Commissioner of Agriculture Doyle Conner introduced the state officers to the cabinet. Commissioner Conner and Commissioner of Insurance Bill Gunter both were state and national president. But they are not the only friends of the FFA on the Florida Cabinet.

Betty Castor, commissioner of education, stated in an address to the cabinet members, "The FFA is the most outstanding organization for young people in the public school system today and produces the highest quality and most effective leaders." Upon conclusion of the cabinet meeting, the FFA members toured the state capitol building and met the commissioners at the Governor's Club for a luncheon sponsored by the Division of Forestry.

Seated, left to right, Commissioner Bill Gunter, Commissioner Betty Castor and Commissioner Doyle Conner. Standing, left to right, are the state officers Sonja Mullins; Jeff Johnson; Becky Shaw; Bonny Owens; Melissa Atkinson, representing Bunnell FFA; Shayla Wetherington; Rick Little; and Ron Gilley.

Fun with Food for America

The Wellington, Ohio, FFA decided to change the chapter's usual Food for America to make it more fun for the third grade students and the chapter members who participated in the one-day event.

The third grade class was divided into nine groups: pink pigs, white sheep, purple cows, green tractors, brown horses, yellow ears of corn, orange chickens, red barns and gray rabbits. There were six games for the third graders to play—the mini-bale throw, wheelbarrow race, an egg roll, tire roll, tug-of-war and a sack race.

Also there was a petting zoo, milking demonstration and a movie about where food comes from. The animals for the petting zoo were donated by the chapter members. Tractors and other supplies were donated by local agribusinesses.

The nine groups went through a rotation where there was a set number of minutes for each event. The winners out of each group would compete in the finals after the discussion period. Plaques were handed out by the purple cows at the end for the top three placings in each event. *(Pat Knoble, Reporter)*

I Heard It Through The Grapevine

FFA Chapters in Virginia sent 600 members plus advisors and guidance counselors to the seventh annual FFA Leadership Conference at Virginia Tech in early October.

The event is organized each year by the Virginia Tech Agricultural Education Society to provide leadership training that is beneficial for high school FFA members plus gives Virginia Tech ag ed students a chance to assist with the instruction.

Workshops led by the AES members and state FFA officers included such titles as: "Uniting the World," "How to be Marvelous," "I Heard it Through the Grapevine" and "You Are What You Do."

Keynote speaker for the event was Jones Loflin, national FFA vice president from Noth Carolina. He provided motivation and high-level energy throughout the day with his session entitled "Who...Me?"

The event is financed by state sponsors.

They Cleaned Up

On September 21, 1986, the Jackson Heights FFA in Holton, Kansas, organized a trip to a Kansas City Chiefs game and made plans to clean up Arrowhead Stadium afterwards. We worked with 29 FFA Alumni members and parents, 18 Future Homemakers of America members and 54 FFA members. The cooperation involved in the five-hour cleanup was tremendous. We made $2,300 which helped sponsor chapter awards and trips to state and national activities. *(From National Chapter Award Application)*

Blue Ribbon Show

The Penn Laird, Virginia, Chapter hay, grain and vegetable show is an activity in which all members participate. The chapter awards ribbons and prize money to the top four placings in each class. A total of 87 classes were set up for members to exhibit their crops. An award is given to the member with the most exhibits and the one having the most points. Eight hundred seventy-five exhibits were entered in this year's show. An open house for parents was held along with show. The show is judged by members of our alumni association and a local Ruritan Club provides the ribbons for the show. It is an excellent opportunity for FFA members to exhibit their projects. *(From National Chapter Award Application)*

Eastern Stars

Two FFA members received "star" designations during FFA Day at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Massachusetts, this year. The awards were sponsored by Sears Roebuck and Company. Shown here, from left to right, are Richard George, manager of the Springfield Sears Roebuck and Company; Raymond M. Beriswill, 20, of Grafton, Ohio, named Eastern States Star Farmer; Jones Loflin, national FFA eastern region vice president; David Nicoson, 18, of Ware, Massachusetts, named Eastern States Star Agribusiness Person and George Jones, executive vice president of the Eastern States Exposition.

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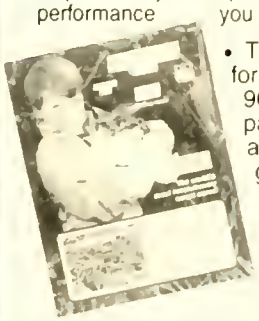

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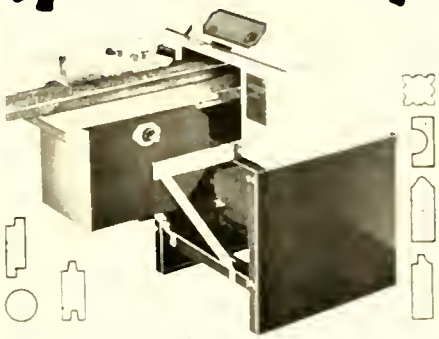

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FFA In Action

Joe Dunphy guides his tractor down the track in the chapter's second annual micro-mini tractor pull to attract attention for tractor safety among all ages of the rural population.

Pull In Publicity

The Amboy, Illinois, Chapter conducted several public relations activities this year during FFA Week.

Members hosted activities to get the entire school involved like dress-up days; special contests to test students' knowledge on agriculture and the FFA; and a special breakfast for school administrators, faculty and employees.

The finale of the week was the annual barnyard zoo held in the agriculture shop. Students enjoyed a break from classes to view the different animals and to learn a little more about where their food comes from.

The second annual micro-mini tractor pull was held in the school mall. The kindergarten students were invited and special demonstrations were performed for them. "Please Be Careful—We Love You" tractor safety stickers were distributed to the kindergarten class members and they were asked to give them to someone they know who owns a tractor. *(From National Chapter Award Application)*

Sign of Progress

When the Montgomery, Ohio, Soil and Water Conservation District signed a 25-year lease with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to manage the Sycamore Farm property, the Montgomery County JVS FFA Chapter signed on too.

Ceremonies for opening the farm project were attended by FFA officers and the county and state leaders involved.

FFA will be working with the SCS as well as the Department of Natural Resources on reconstruction of buildings, development of land around the farm and woodlot management.

Three MCJVS FFA officers, Eric Rich, Amy Barnhart and Tom Baker, met with many county and state officials regarding the role of vocational agricultural students in this project. *(Amy Barnhart, Reporter)*

Come See What It's Like

Six members of the Chariton, Iowa, FFA drove 19 hours to an officer training camp in the advisor's hometown of Rocky Ridge, Maryland.

Besides leadership training and revising the program of activities, officers visited the Catoctin FFA Chapter in Thurmont, Maryland, and made plans for a chapter-to-chapter exchange.

The chapters agreed to travel to visit each other's state during the summer of 1988. The purpose of such an exchange is to gain knowledge of agriculture in other parts of the country.

The Iowa officers added a visit to Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Ocean City and Gettysburg to their 12-day trip. Plus they visited one of the area's largest dairy farms.

Safety Talks

For many years our chapter has conducted a community safety program. One of our most popular activities ia a Halloween safety program. This year local FFA members in official dress and in Halloween costumes visited 900 children in 13 elementary schools here in Roswell, New Mexico.

During this classroom teaching session, FFA members provided young children with information concerning safe trick or treating.

Chapter members obtained the information used from local hospitals and the Roswell Police Department.

Members paint crosswalks and school zone markers at one of the rural schools in the area as a community service project each year.

Other safety activities included a cardiopulmonary resusitation (CPR) school for chapter members and other interested members of the community. This program included classroom instruction and practical experience. Nearly all of the participants in the CPR program were able to meet the state certification requirements. *(From National Chapter Award Application)*

Floating Awards

Three Indiana FFA floats were award winners during the Indiana State Fair opening day parade in August.

A float constructed by the four FFA

chapters in Henry County, Indiana – Knightstown, Tri High, Blue River Valley and Shenandoah – captured first place in the youth division of the float competition. For their efforts, the chapters were awarded a plaque and a check for $500.

The Mooresville, Indiana, FFA Chapter's float in the Indiana State Fair parade featured Uncle Sam, livestock, FFA members, an antique tractor and was centered around the parade's theme "A Salute to Agriculture."

The Mooresville FFA Chapter won second place in the youth division of float competition and was awarded a plaque and a check for $400.

A float entered by the Greenfield Central FFA Chapter was named the sixth place winner. Members from Greenfield were awarded a plaque and a check for $75.

Up Front Artists

The East Clinton, Ohio, FFA has recently completed this year's BOAC project, the restoration of the Sabina Senior Citizens Center, in September. The work crew was headed up by the community service committee with Jeff Luttrell as chairman, Robb Willoughby as assistant chairman, plus Kevin Adkins, Richard Stewart, Tracy Fliehman and Travis Woods.

The majority of the work was painting the outside of the building and parts of the inside. Prior to painting, the outside of the building was scraped and prepared for the painting artists. Then Kristin Calendine and Sherri Bentley came back to finish painting the trim on the front of the building. The FFA will finish the project by putting up their new senior citizen sign and making flower boxes for the front of the building.

The senior citizens showed their appreciation by serving members dinner and thanking them for their hard work. *(Kristin Calendine, Reporter)*

Ladders, brushes, bucket ready! The artists gave the building a new look.

Commercial Riders

Jilanne Grant, a Chief Washakie FFA member from Worland, West Virginia, brought the good old ways back to her city this summer. Jilanne started her own business "Kalamidy Anne's Buggy Rides." She has taught her Quarter Horse mare to pull an original two-seat buggy. The business has been used for weddings, anniversaries, birthdays and parades as well as people just riding around enjoying themselves. This is Jilanne's agribusiness project. Next year, she's hoping to have two buggies in operation.

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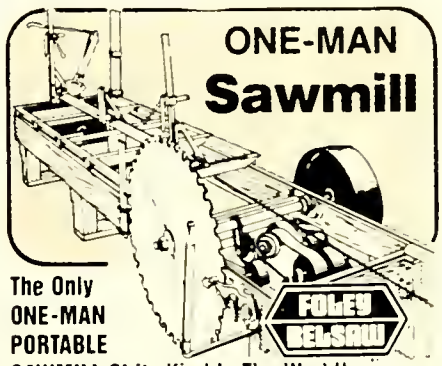

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Joke Page

Teacher: *"What is confidence?"*
Student: *"Confidence is going out to hunt Moby Dick with a pea shooter and a jar of tartar sauce."*

Quentin Cookson
North Scituate, Rhode Island

Q: Who mows the lawn on Walton's Mountain?
A: Lawn Boy

Harold Johnson
Forestville, California

"Here comes Shorty now!"

Two police officers from the city went deer hunting. One of them had never hunted before, but he found a good place to hide, close to a trail that deer were known to use.

As he waited patiently, he heard rustling in the bushes. His pulse rate climbed when a whitetail jumped out. Jumping up from his hiding place, he fired a warning shot into the air and yelled *"Freeze! Police!"*

George Biddle
Kirklin, Indiana

John was using an outside phone one day when Jack came up and asked him who he was trying to call. He responded, *"I'm trying to call the new girl at school."*

Jack said, *"I heard she had an '800' number."*

John said, *"You mean I can call her toll free."*

Jack said, *"No, but after the 799th time you might get through."*

Tom Parnell
Hamilton, Ohio

Three men wanted to see the Olympics, but tickets were sold out. The first man said, *"I have an idea. Watch this."* He found a hubcap and walked up to the front gate. *"I'm here for the discus throwing event."* The guard let him in.

The second man said, *"I have another idea. Watch this."* He pulled a pole out of the ground and walked up to the front gate. He said to the guard, *"Javelin throwing."* The guard let him in.

The third man went to the hardware store and bought 20 feet of barbed wire. Then he walked up to the front gate. When the guard looked at him, he held up the barbed wire and said, *"Fencing."*

Jimmy Ford
Millport, Alabama

His jokes are so old when they were first told, the Dead Sea was only sick!

Steve Marshall
Appomattox, Virginia

The customer asked the waitress for her telephone number. She promptly gave it to him. When he called her, a voice anwsered, *"Pest Control Service."*

Marguerite Reasner
Indianapolis, Indiana

Two guys were going into the watermelon business, so they bought a truck. They bought a truckload of watermelons for a dollar apiece and sold them for a dollar apiece. Then one looked at the other and said, *"I don't think we're making any money."*

The other one said, *"Yeah, next year we will get a bigger truck."*

Jerry Hostler
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

Q: Why is "A" like a honeysuckle?
A: Because a "B" follows it.

James Johnson
Orange Grove, Texas

After a two-week camping trip, we stopped at the general store for ice cream cones. *"Well, did you have a good time?"* the proprietress asked.

"Great!" I answered, *"but how did you know we are ending our vacation instead of starting it?"*

"Simple," came the tart reply, *"you have a tan, you smell like campfire smoke and all those band-aids."*

Rodney Miller
Brashear, Texas

Charlie, the Greenhand

"How can you be my helper if you can't stand the sight of needles?"

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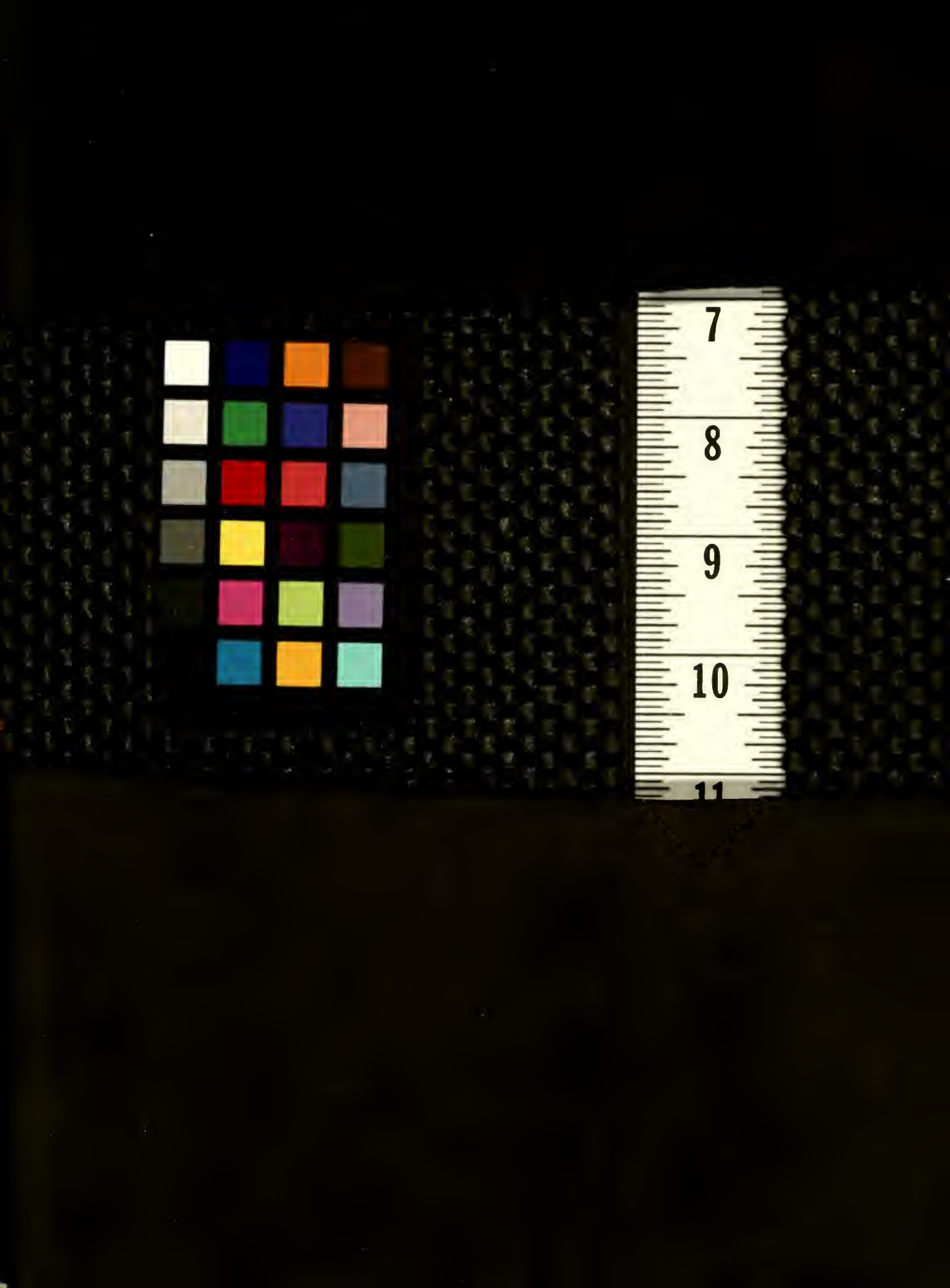
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